DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 992 SO 032 133

AUTHOR	Burr, Margaret; Warner, Rachel, Ed.
TITLE	We Have Always Lived Here: The Maya of Guatemala. An Active Learning Pack for Key Stages 2 and 3.
INSTITUTION	Minority Rights Group, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-0-946690-85-5
PUB DATE	1991-10-00
NOTE	117p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Minority Rights Group, 379 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 020 7978 9498; Fax: +44 (0) 207 738 6265; Web site: http://www.minorityrights.org.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Learner (051) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil Liberties; Developing Nations; Foreign Countries; *Indigenous Populations; Intermediate Grades; *Latin American History; *Maya (People); Mayan Languages
IDENTIFIERS	*Guatemala; *Mayan Civilization

ABSTRACT

This information pack tells the story of one of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the Maya of Guatemala. It covers Mayan culture and daily life as well as the discrimination experienced by the Maya and the fight for human rights in Guatemala. Containing a wealth of activities designed for mixed ability classes, the pack also can be used for teaching about Central American history, human rights, prejudice, and racism. The pack contains: Information Book; Pupils' Activity Book; Teachers' Notes; and 20 Photocards. (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 445 992

We Have Always Lived Here: The Maya of Guatemala

Burr, Margaret
Warner, Rachel, Ed.

SO 032 133

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A. Warren

2A TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA

BY MARGARET BURR
EDITED BY RACHEL WARNER

AN ACTIVE LEARNING PACK
FOR KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

TEACHERS' NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are due to the following:

Comments and testing: Paula Bartley, Tony Booth, Lynne Broadbent, Patrick Costello, Sarah Crowley, Grace Fisher, Duncan Green, Jean Harrison, Barbara Karelis, Chris Kelly, Sue Laney, Dave Lawrence, Chris Lee, Dougie McKenzie, Valerie Narayanaswamy, Wendy Ongay-Perez, Jill Rutter, Stuart Scott, Sem Simkins, Jacqui Smith, David Tombs, Ros Wade, Ann Whittle, Andrea Wood

For use of photographs and additional materials: Krystyna Deuss at MAYA, the Guatemalan Indian Centre; the Guatemala Committee For Human Rights

For use of materials: Amnesty International (for material from *Guatemala: the Human Rights Record* (AI Index:AMR 34/04/87)); Andromeda Oxford Ltd (for material from *Atlas of Ancient America* by Michael Coe, Dean Snow and Elizabeth Benson); Ruben Blades (for the song 'Disappearances'); The Bodley Head (for material from *Time Among The Maya* by Ronald Wright); Christian Aid and CAFOD (for material from *We Ask Why They Are Hungry*); Cultural Survival Quarterly (for the poem by José Pérez Aguirre); Magnetic Publications (for Sting's song 'They Dance Alone'); Orbis Books (for material from *What Prize Awaits Us* by Bernice Kita); Verso (for extracts from *I... Roberta Menchú: an Indian woman in Guatemala*)

(We have endeavoured to find the holders of the copyright for all material used in the pack.)

For help with photos: Ralph Hoyte, Ian Mursell

For support in the office: Alan Phillips, Gloria Mitchell, Brian Morrison, Patricia Sellick, Kaye Stearman and Robert Webb

For all illustrations other than those credited in the text: Noel Treacy

For financial support: CAFOD, London Boroughs Grants Unit, The Onaway Trust, Oxfam, SCIAF

For support: Omar Alghali, Reuben Alghali, Noel Treacy

Special thanks are also due to the staff and pupils of Notre Dame School in Southwark

FUNDED BY

Designed by Chris Hudson
Typeset by Panache Graphics Limited
Printed by Manchester Free Press

© **Minority Rights Group** Teachers may reproduce material in this pack for classroom use, but no part of it may be reproduced for commercial reasons without the prior permission of the Minority Rights Group.

Cover photo by Jenny Matthews

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

THE CURRICULUM AND WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE 2

English 2
History 2
Cross-Curricular Themes
Education for Citizenship 2
Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding 2
Health Education 3
Religious Education 3
Modern Studies in Scotland 4
Information Technology 4
Dance, Drama, Art and Textiles 4
Primary Schools 4

USING THE PACK 5

SUMMARY CHART 6

WAYS IN TO THE PACK 9

Human rights exercise 9
The insight game 9
Photo activities 12

ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO SPECIFIC INFORMATION SHEETS 13

ADDITIONAL NOTES — THE BREAKDOWN OF MAYAN CULTURE 14

FURTHER INFORMATION 15

ANSWERS 15

BIBLIOGRAPHY 16

SOURCES 17

1 INTRODUCTION

The Maya of Guatemala are one of the largest concentrations of indigenous peoples in the world. There are 22 different Mayan groups who make up an estimated 65% of the population of Guatemala, each with its own language. They form a majority of the population and have continued to follow a way of life distinct from that of the dominant ladino (of mixed indigenous and Spanish origin) part of the population. The Maya are regarded as second-class citizens by the ladino and are a 'minority' not in terms of numbers, but in terms of rights.

The Maya are facing the greatest threat to their existence since the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century. Their life and culture are under threat from two sides:

1 Physical attack from the military or the military-backed government set on the internal colonisation of the country resulting in 40,000 'disappearances' and 100,000 killed in the last thirty years.

2 Economic pressure from the growing scarcity of land amongst the Mayan communities and the effects of their growing involvement in a modernising economy. Hundreds of thousands of Maya are forced to migrate to coastal plantations *(fincas)* to harvest cash crops in unacceptable conditions for totally inadequate wages.

AIMS OF THE PACK

By introducing the experience of the Maya, the pack aims to encourage pupils to:

- understand and appreciate the rights of minorities;
- develop skills of understanding and empathy with different cultures and approaches to life;
- explore the conditions needed for a full and fair experience of life;
- reconsider some of their own values and attitudes.

FIVE GOOD REASONS FOR USING THIS PACK

1 Supports the National Curriculum

2 A wealth of evidence and testimonies for pupils

3 Potential for cross-curricular work

4 Collaborative exercises for group work

5 Activities at different levels for mixed ability classrooms

Divided into four sections, the pack explores:

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
The history of the Maya and aspects of Mayan culture today

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY
Discrimination and disadvantage in everyday life

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF
The legacy of the last 500 years, repression and racial discrimination today

D THE MISSING
Disappearances and human rights groups in Guatemala today

Margaret Burr is a Learning Resources Advisor for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, with responsibility for the Centre of Humanities Education Library. She has worked in education since 1976, including two years living and working in Latin America. She has been involved for the last five years on a project on the Missing in Guatemala with pupils at Notre Dame School in Southwark which resulted in an exhibition entitled *'We're doing this for real: the Missing of Guatemala'*.

Rachel Warner has been MRG's Education Officer since February 1990. She was previously a teacher for 12 years, teaching English and English as a Second Language in Leicester, India, High Wycombe and London, where she was Head of Department in a comprehensive school. She is the author of seven multicultural books for young children.

2

THE CURRICULUM AND WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

The following sections show how the pack supports different areas of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, and Modern Studies in Scotland.

KEY
● = supports closely
○ = useful for background

ENGLISH

	A	B	C	D
AT1				
Speaking and Listening				
level 4	○	●	●	●
level 5	○	●	●	●
level 6	○	●	●	●
level 7	○	●	●	●
level 8	○	●	●	●
AT2				
Reading				
level 4	○	●	●	●
level 5	○	●	●	●
level 6	○	●	●	●
level 7			●	●
level 8				●
AT3				
Writing				
level 4	●	●	●	●
level 5	●	●	●	●
level 6	●	●	●	●
level 7		●	●	●
level 8		●	●	●

HISTORY

Section A of the pack fulfils the requirements of Supplementary Study Unit 11 for **KS2:**

The Maya (AD 250 - 900)

How people lived:
- settlements and dwellings
- family life
- agriculture

Religion:
- gods and goddesses
- creation myths
- pyramids and temples
- festivals, ceremonies and sacrifices

Scientific achievements:
- mathematics
- astronomy and calendars

Artistic achievements:
- stone inscriptions and hieroglyphics
- sculpture, ceramics and painting
- temple, palace and city architecture

CROSS-CURRICULAR THEMES

Education for Citizenship

KS2 and KS3	A	B	C	D
Community	●	●	●	●
Pluralist Society	●	●	●	●
Being a Citizen	●	●	●	●
The Family	○	○		
Democracy in Action				○
Citizen and the Law			○	○
Work, Employment and Leisure		○		

Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding

KS2			
1 Understand implications of limited resources	●	●	○
2 Know all decisions involve opportunity costs		●	○
3 Costs and benefits of everyday choices	○	●	○
4 Appreciate human needs	○	●	●	●

	A	B	C	D
7 Workplaces organised in different ways		○		
8 Some understanding of how goods produced etc		○		
10 Develop understanding of nature of work		○		
13 Appreciate some environmental and social issues		○		
14 Recognise similarities and differences globally	○	●		
KS3				
Economic Concepts				
1 Scarcity of available resources		●	○	
3 Money, goods and services			○	
4 Patterns of wealth distribution		●		
6 Interdependence of different industries		○		
Consumer Affairs				
13 Consumer decisions		●		
Government and Society				
17 Government has an important role		○		
20 Public issues – government, economics and society		●		

Health Education

KS2				
Family life education	●	○	●	●
Food and nutrition	○			
Environmental aspects	●	○	●	
Psychological aspects	○	○	●	●
KS3				
Family life education	●			●
Food and nutrition	○	●		

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The pack presents many opportunities for cross curricular work for RE at both primary and secondary level.

Calendars
Rites of Passage – birth, coming of age
Attitudes of Christianity towards indigenous religious practice
Maya Creation Story
WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE: THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA Links with RE
Strangers in our own land – refugees
Rituals – sowing and harvesting the land
Communities
Festivals – New Year
Cry for the land – a sense of belonging
Symbols – Clothes

KS2 and KS3 pupils could focus on the Mayan Creation story (**People of maize**, Information sheet 6), Calendars (**Counting the days**, Information sheet 7), Festivals (**People of Maize**, Activity sheet 8), Rituals (**Maize**, Information sheet 8), Rites of Passage (**Keep our secrets**, Information sheet 11 and **Becoming an adult**, Information sheet 12) and Symbols (**Woven pictures**, Information sheet 13).

KS4 pupils could focus on the whole notion of community, a sense of belonging expressed through symbol and special dress, a sense of belonging to the land and a study of 'a community oppressed'. The interaction between Christianity and the indigenous religion could also be explored.

See: Symbols (**Woven pictures**, Information sheet 13), Communities (**To be Maya**, Information sheet 10), A sense of belonging (**Cry for land**, Information sheet 17), Strangers in our own land (**In hope of returning**, Information sheets 28-30)

MODERN STUDIES IN SCOTLAND

'We Have Always Lived Here' would support Standard Grade Modern Studies teachers in Scotland in imparting the following concepts:

equality
power
representation
rights and responsibilities

The pack could also be used as a resource for Standard Grade Modern Studies students undertaking their independent Individual Study if they chose to do a study on, for example, Central America, Human Rights or Rights of Minorities.

If Modern Studies teachers wish to teach thematically, then the pack can be used to pursue the theme of human rights through the syllabus areas.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

There is potential within each section of the pack for the use of information technology: word processing, desk top publishing, graphics and databases.

DANCE, DRAMA, ART AND TEXTILES

If the pack is being pursued in a cross-curricular way then there is potential for work on Guatemala in Dance, Drama, Art and Textiles lessons. See particularly the booklet produced by Notre Dame pupils for ideas and suggestions.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – EXTRA IDEAS FOR CROSS CURRICULAR WORK

Maize – bring in maize (corn on the cob) for pupils to examine, feel and draw. Maize plants could be grown from seed and the stages of growth recorded by drawings, graphs and measurements. As with the Maya, there could be a celebration when the first leaves appear.

Design pupils could design their own posters, for example, celebrating the history of the Americas, not just the last 500 years, or one based on some of the quotes by the Maya in the pack.

Buildings – pupils could make models, for example, of the temple at Tikal.

Everyday lives –pupils could tell the story of a day in the life of a Mayan child in the past. They could tell the story using just pictures if they wanted, like a comic strip.

Codices – pupils could make their own codex using cardboard or computer paper to obtain the folding pages effect. They could then design their own glyphs to write a simple story in the codex. They could use potato prints to decorate their codices.

Weaving – pupils could use the traditional Mayan designs or make up their own for simple card weaving or Binka work. They could make Mayan costumes for dolls.

Masks – pupils could make masks based on glyphs.

Board games pupils could design their own board games using the information on the sheets. **Journey to the Finca**, **Nation of prisoners**, **Patrolling the countryside** and **In hope of returning** would be particularly suitable.

USING THE PACK

READING

As so little is generally known about the Maya, the pack necessarily involves some reading of essential information before pupils can do the suggested activities. Teachers will have a variety of ways of organising this reading – for example reading out loud to the class, pupils reading individually, pupils reading in small groups. However, we suggest the following DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Text) as a way in to the text BEFORE attempting the core, development and extension activities. These DARTs can be presented to pupils as puzzles and are all designed to make pupils read passages carefully and maximise their engagement with the text. They are most effectively done by discussion in small groups.

1 Cloze procedure The information sheet could have every nth, say 5th or 7th, word deleted. OR, better still, the words deleted can be carefully chosen by the teacher, so the clues that the pupils have to use in order to work out the missing word maximise learning.

2 Sequencing The information sheet can be cut up into sections and the pupils' task is to use evidence from the text to piece it together again in a way that makes most sense.

3 Prediction The information sheet could again be cut up and presented in bits, one at a time (in the right order). After reading each bit pupils can decide what that section is about and then predict what they think will come next. They then read the next bit of text. This activity would be suitable only with certain texts.

(For further information on DARTs see *Learning from the Written Word* by Lunzer and Gardner).

◆ Please note that page 9 of these Teachers' Notes suggests 'Ways in' to teaching about the Maya. **It is strongly recommended that at least one of these introductory activities is undertaken before starting any of the work on the Maya.**

◆ The activity sheets have deliberately been kept separate from the information sheets so that the information sheets can be used in a variety of ways and in a variety of subject areas.

◆ The activities on the pupil activity sheets are marked:

These represent **core**, **development** and **extension** activities, to cater for the range of abilities and interests in a mixed-ability classroom.

If pupils only do the core activities then they provide a quick route through the essential information in the pack.

◆ The activities are also marked to indicate whether they are for **INDIVIDUAL**, **PAIR** or **GROUP** work.

Obviously these are only guidelines.

◆ On two occasions teacher-led activities **must** be carried out before using the information sheets with pupils. These are marked **!** on the Summary chart and the activities themselves appear on page 13 of these Teachers' Notes.

Before giving pupils the information sheet **Keep our secrets** the core activity on the activity sheet **must** be done first. This is also marked **!** in the Summary Chart.

6

SUMMARY CHART

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The history of the Maya and aspects of Mayan culture today

Title and Content	Objectives	Skills	Notes and ◆ *Extension*
We have always lived here Mayan civilisation, architecture	To introduce Mayan life and culture in the Classic period	Use of maps/picture interpretation/analysis of sources/ comparisons/ research/game design	
Records of the past Writing, sculpture	To look at Mayan forms of recording information	Picture interpretation/ analysis of sources/ matching/design/ empathy	
People of maize Religion, creation myths, ceremonies	To look at Mayan religion and beliefs	Hypothesising/ sequencing/ analysing sources/ comparisions/ research/discussion	Self-sacrifice in form of fasting and bloodletting played a major role in religious ceremonies ◆ *Could link myths of creation with geographical location*
Counting the days Numbers, time, calendars	To look at Mayan counting	Numerical/ sequencing/ research/design	
Maize Harvest, cooking	To explore the influence and importance of growing maize on the lives of the Maya	Sequencing/ comparisons/ picture interpretation/ discussion	◆ *Could discuss where foods come from and which foods are important to us* ◆ *Could investigate harvest festivals and prayers relating to nature*
Everyday lives Water, market, houses	To look at everyday activities and to compare them with everyday lives in the past		
To be Maya Maya today, community, land, environment, maize	To explore facets of the Mayan identity, the relationship between the individual and the community	Comparisons/ listening/ creative writing/ design/empathy/ discussion	**! Teacher led activity first**
Keep our secrets Birth ceremonies, *Nahual* (guiding spirit)	To look at customs relating to birth and childhood, and understand their importance in preserving culture and tradition	Matching/ comparisons/ creative writing/ design/empathy	**! Pupils must do core activity on activity sheet before reading information sheet** ◆ *Could ask at home about what special celebrations or events took place at the time of their birth. Pupils could find out which traditions or customs have changed and which have stayed the same*
Becoming an adult Significant birthdays, customs	To look at taking individual responsibility	Selecting information/ discussion/empathy	It is to BE someone respected rather than to HAVE something which is important to the Maya

Woven pictures Weaving designs	To examine the symbolism of weaving designs	Matching/creative writing/design	
What we wear Clothes: female and male	To look at Mayan *traje* (clothing) and understand the importance of the *traje* to the Maya		

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY

Discrimination and disadvantage in everyday life

Journey to the *finca* Work conditions, seasonal migration	To explore the conditions under which the Maya live and work on the plantations	Selecting information/ organising information /role play/empathy	◆ *Could develop work on employment and trade unions*
Cry for land Cash crops, inequality of land distribution, debt	To examine land use in Guatemala and its effects on the Maya	Sequencing/creative writing/play writing/ empathy	◆ *Could look further at the issue of debt – both personal, in the UK and at the current international debt crisis* ◆ *Could look at issues surrounding agribusiness, land use and land reform*
In sickness and in health Health, pesticide use, malnutrition	To look at the disadvantages suffered by the Maya with regard to health and diet	Extracting information /report writing/ discussion	
Pablo's dream Education for the Maya	To look at the Mayan experience of the education system	Selecting information/ discussion/ game design	
Teaching my people Literacy, language, radio schools, prejudice	To look at Mayan educational initiatives in preserving their own culture		

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

The legacy of the last 500 years, repression and racial discrimination today

Then the Spanish came Decline in population, destruction of culture	To examine the effects of the Spanish arrival on the Maya	Hypothesising/ extracting information/analysis of sources/ questionnaire design	
Finding a voice History since Independence, repression	To summarise the situation of the Maya from Independence to the present day	Selecting information/ extracting information/ comparisons/creative writing	For further information on the content of this section see the MRG Profile. The International Committee of the Red Cross has not been allowed into Guatemala since 1980
Guatemala... Killing fields Attacks on the Maya, arms spending	To look at some responses to the attacks on the Maya	Extracting information/ use of tables/graph work	
Bitter and cruel People's views on discrimination	To raise awareness of the discrimination, prejudice and racism suffered by the Maya	Extracting information/ creative writing/ play writing/empathy	◆ *Could explore discrimination and racism in other situations*

Nation of prisoners Development poles, model villages	To introduce the system of relocating the Maya	Selecting information/ discussion/reading comprehension	**! Teacher led activity first** The Maya have no rights and are not involved in decision-making in the model villages. Support, eg. food, is for meeting immediate needs and there is little or no planning for the future. No moves towards independence and self-sufficiency. The Maya often have to spend time in re-education camps before being sent to a model village ◆ *Could develop idea of power versus powerless*
Patrolling the countryside Civil patrols, duties, obligations	To look at the civil patrols, the hardships suffered and moral dilemmas imposed by civil patrol duties	Extracting information/ play writing/ discussion/empathy	
In hope of returning Refugees: internal and external, street children, exile	To look at alternative situations which face the Maya when they are forced to leave their homes and at the dilemmas involved in returning	Role play/empathy/ extracting information/ creative writing	**! Pupils can do role play before or after reading the information sheets**

D THE MISSING

Disappearances and human rights groups in Guatemala today

The Missing	To show that is it ordinary people who go missing in Guatemala (and elsewhere)	Extracting information/empathy/ creative writing/ discussion	If teachers wish to look at the issue of the Missing with regard to the Maya, without using the whole pack, the information sheets 'Then the Spanish came', 'Finding a voice' and 'Guatemala... killing fields' should be used first to provide background information to the current situation
Disappearances Details of missing	To look at Guatemalan cases of missing people and the reasons for the disappearances	Extracting information/creative writing/discussion	The expression *'to be disappeared'* originated in Guatemala. The Missing of Guatemala account for over 40% of the total numbers missing in Latin America
Speaking out Human rights groups in Guatemala, their respective roles	To look at the aims of three different human rights groups within Guatemela, examine the dilemma faced by people in Guatemala about whether to speak out or not	Selecting information/ extracting information/ role play/creative writing/discussion/ design/empathy	Emotional suffering is often accompanied by financial hardship because it is often the breadwinner who has gone missing
Tell as many people as you can International support	To look at how those outside Guatemala can help	Arguing a case/ creative writing/ design	

WAYS IN ◆TO◆ THE PACK

1 HUMAN RIGHTS EXERCISE

Aim: To develop an awareness of what is needed for human existence.

It is important not to tell the pupils at this stage that they will be learning about the Maya.

A Get pupils to make a list of up to 10 rights which they think everyone should have. (To start this exercise perhaps the first two could be found as a class together.) Pupils should keep this list as it will be referred to at the end of the project.

B With a partner, pupils should make two lists:

NEEDS TO SURVIVE	NEEDS FOR A HAPPY LIFE
eg. things to eat, wear	*eg. music to listen to*

At the end bring the class together for discussion and to draw separate class lists under both titles.

C Ask the pupils to identify an aspect of their culture which would show a stranger what is important to them. They should bring something in to the next lesson to illustrate this. (Suggestions could include food, clothes, tape etc.) Look at the different contributions brought in by the class. Ask for pupil volunteers to show the rest of the class their artefact and explain what is the significance of their chosen object.

At the end of the work on the Maya:

Get pupils to look back at their list of 10 rights that they thought everyone should have. Ask them to think of all that they've learnt about Guatemala.

With a partner get pupils to decide what 10 rights they think the Maya should have. They should compare this list with their original.

Are the lists the same or different? They should discuss this with their partner. They should now make a list of the 10 rights that they think everyone in the world should have. Have their ideas about rights changed? How?

Ask pupils to think of what object they brought in to show a stranger what was important to them. Then ask them if they were a Maya what object would they use to show a stranger what was important to them? Why?

2 THE INSIGHT GAME

Again, do not initially tell pupils the game is about the Maya

Aims: ◆ To provide an opportunity for pupils to identify with members of a minority group – the Maya of Guatemala.

◆ To provide an introduction to the Maya that involves pupils' feelings – particularly important as they are unlikely to know anything about the Maya before starting this work.

◆ To give pupils an idea of the living conditions and lifestyle of the Maya.

Preparation

Make photocopies of the sheet entitled 'Positive/Negative'. Cut out the statements. You can mount them on card if you wish. One full set will contain 12 cards. You may find it helpful to distinguish the 'positive' cards from the 'negative' cards by sticking them onto different-coloured cards, eg. green = +, white = -.

Organisation

Seat the pupils in small groups of about five. Ask one member of each group to record all of the group's responses to the questions on the large sheets of paper provided.

Tell the pupils that, for the purpose of this exercise, they are no longer going to be themselves (ie. pupils of their school), but are going to become members of a minority group in the world today. For the moment, the pupils are asked NOT to question who they are, but to think instead about the information given on the cards as if describing themselves and their situation.

10

The game

Part 1 Give each small group:

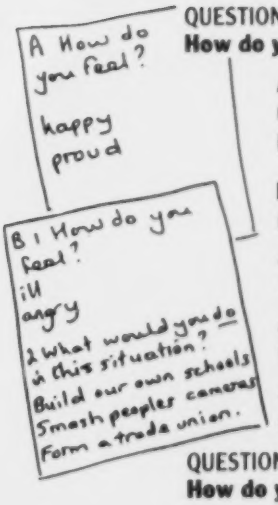
a set of positive cards (6)
two large sheets of sugar paper (one marked 'A', the other 'B')
a marker pen

◆ Ask the pupils in turn to read aloud their card(s) to the other members of the group.

◆ Remind them that all the information they are being given is about them (their group) and the situation they are in.

◆ Ask them to discuss their reactions to the information.

◆ Ask them to answer this question:



QUESTION 1
How do you feel, being in this group?

All of their responses should be recorded on Sheet A. One-word or short phrase responses are enough.

Part 2 Give each small group the negative cards (6).

◆ Ask the pupils in turn to read out their cards to the rest of the group.

◆ Ask them, in the same way, to discuss their reactions to the information.

◆ Ask them to record on Sheet B their responses to the same question:

QUESTION 1
How do you feel, being in this group?

Also: ask them to consider and discuss:

QUESTION 2
What would you DO in this situation?

Note: It is very important for this part of the exercise that all of the pupils are encouraged to suggest whatever they like. All responses or suggestions should be recorded, however silly, flippant or negative. Encourage discussion of reactions as individuals and as a group.

Remind the group that they are still the same group who wrote down their feelings on Sheet A. Would anything on that sheet, or any feelings they had then, help now?

Reporting back

Ask each group in turn to report back to the whole class:

their feelings: sheet A
their feelings and actions: sheet B

Note: It is important that all the groups' responses to Question 1 should be fully discussed before going on to consider their proposed actions (Question 2).

Discussion points might well include:

1 FEELINGS

Positive

◆ The wide range of positive, good, creative, imaginative feelings experienced by the group before they received the second set of cards.

◆ The high opinion they might have had of themselves, and their feelings of value and worth.

◆ Their confidence and high self-esteem.

◆ Their assumptions about the future and the way they expected others to look at them.

◆ Taking their rights for granted, etc.

Negative

◆ Then, how those feelings changed, and why that happened.

◆ Feelings of indignation, and of not being understood.

◆ Of somehow being misrepresented.

◆ Of 'it is not fair'.

◆ How negative feelings can arise not only about outsiders (non-group members), but also about others in the group, or even themselves.

◆ Note the wide range of responses, and the differences between individual and group reactions.

2 ACTIONS

◆ The range of possibilities, both positive and negative.

◆ The creative responses

◆ The destructive responses, aimed both towards the group and outsiders generally

◆ The relation between what the groups have suggested and what the Maya have done in reality. (Prior to this the pupils can guess at the identity of the group. They are unlikely to identify the Maya specifically, so they can be told that the Maya are the original people of Guatemala, a country in Central America. The Maya have lived in this area for thousands of years and had a great civilisation. However the *ladinos* of Guatemala (those of mixed Indian and Spanish origin) treat the Maya as second-class citizens.)

Summing up

◆ As a class, ask the children what they think they found out from this exercise, whether about themselves and their reactions, or about the group itself.

◆ Can they see any similarities between their reaction to this minority group and any other they know?

+ POSITIVE	– NEGATIVE
Our family, friends and community are very important to us. We try to live close together and help each other out.	*Our land has been taken from us. We have been pushed higher and higher into the mountains, where it is difficult to grow enough to live on.*
We are proud of our history and traditions. Our people created one of the great civilisations of the world. You can still see its magnificent monuments.	*We have to work on the large plantations in order to survive. The conditions there are very bad. We come back ill and make little money.*
We have always lived here and have always taken care of our environment. We respect the earth and the natural world.	*Getting a good education is difficult for us. We do not have many of our own schools. We are usually taught in a language which is not our own. Our history and traditions are ignored.*
Our secrets are kept within the community. They are passed on to the chosen ones who will lovingly keep and preserve our ways.	*Our living conditions are poor. We lack housing with adequate sanitation and running water. When we are ill, we cannot afford to go to the doctor.*
Talking and sharing stories have always been more important than reading and writing.	*We have no chance to put our point of view. We are photographed for our colourful clothes, but the person wearing them is not treated with respect.*
We wear colourful and bright traditional clothes. The designs woven into the material are important to us.	*We often face racist behaviour and violence. We are not counted as people. We have been persecuted and many of us have been killed.*

3 PHOTO ACTIVITIES

Teachers can use the photos as an extra introductory activity, a concluding activity, or at any stage during the work on the Maya.

The photos

1 Mayan woman voting in elections. *Joe Fish/ REPORT/GCHR.*

2 Model village. *Steve Smith/ANDES Press/ GCHR*

3 Rosalina Tuyuc, CONAVIGUA leader, opening letters of support from around the world. *Steve Smith/ANDES Press/GCHR.*

4 Child mascot on parade with Guatemalan army (probably an orphan). *Joe Fish/GCHR.*

5 Mayan worker picking coffee. *GCHR.*

6 Mayan carrying load in Guatemala City. *Joe Fish/GCHR.*

7 GAM demonstration. *Joe Fish/REPORT/GCHR.*

8 Mayan woman in literacy class. *Steve Smith/ GCHR.*

9 Model village showing civil patrol member and soldiers. *GCHR.*

10 Land reform demonstration. The banner reads: 'The land we work isn't ours. Land reform is needed urgently in the countryside. *Paul Harley/GCHR.*

11 Guatemalan refugees. *GCHR.*

12 Ancient Mayan city of Tikal. The main building is the temple of the masks. *GCHR.*

13 Street in Guatemala City. *GCHR.*

14 CERJ meeting. *GCHR.*

15 Women in market. *Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre.*

16 Market scene. *Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre.*

17 Girl at work on steep slope. *Krystyna Deuss/ Maya Centre.*

18 Woman grinding maize flour. *Steve Smith/ ANDES Press/GCHR.*

19 Man weaving. *Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre.*

20 Widow working the land. *Steve Smith/ ANDES Press/GCHR.*

Suggested activities

Aims:

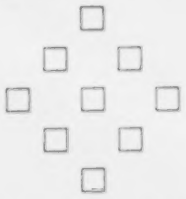
For pupils to see photos as sources of information

For pupils to discover things for themselves from photographs

For pupils to develop empathy with people in different situations

◆ Photos displayed around the room – pupils to choose the photo they like best and explain why to other pupils.

◆ In groups or pairs, pupils rank the photos they like best in a diamond nine, starting with the one they like the most.



◆ In groups or pairs, pupils choose two or three photos on a theme. Eg. the photos that suprise you most; the photos that give you the most information.

◆ In groups or pairs, pupils write down the questions they would most like to have answered about their photo.

◆ In groups or pairs, pupils have to make up their own captions for the photos. They can then check them with the actual captions.

◆ Using the captions provided, pupils in groups or pairs have to match jumbled-up photos to captions.

◆ Present the same pictures with two different captions, one positive and one negative. For example, photo 8 could have the caption 'Classrooms are not well equipped' OR 'Mayan woman having the chance to read and write'. Which is positive and which is negative? How does the caption change the meaning? Pupils could think up their own positive and negative captions for photos.

◆ Pupils could be asked, in groups, to answer the following questions about the photos:

Why do you think the photo was taken?
What is the purpose of the photo?
Who do you think took it?
Who is it appealing to?
What is going on just outside the photo, do you think?
What different pictures of the same thing could have been used instead?

◆ In groups pupils could choose their own categories to organise the photos into – eg. women, people working etc.

◆ In groups pupils could chose pairs of photos which are contrasting – eg. city/countryside.

◆ In groups pupils could chose the photos they would use if they were trying to raise money for Guatemala, and the photos they would use if they were planning a tourist brochure about Guatemala. How are they different?

ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO SPECIFIC INFORMATION SHEETS

TO BE MAYA

(Information sheet 10, Activity sheet 11)

! Preliminary activity

(Before handing out the **To be Maya** information sheet)

Give out the **To be Maya** activity sheet. The pupils should describe themselves as indicated on the worksheet. After the pupils have described themselves to each other and discussed what they have learnt, read them this interview extract which shows how a young Guatemalan woman responded when she was asked to describe herself:

'She told me about her land and her culture and her village and her family and the church and the school and all those things, and I said, "Thank you, now could you tell me a little just about yourself?" She looked at me, very surprised, and said, "But I just did?"'
(Source: *Central America Report* No. 34, p.9)

Pupils should then read the **To be Maya** information sheet.

KEEP OUR SECRETS

(Information sheet 11, Activity sheet 12)

! It is important that pupils do the Core activity on the Activity sheet **before** they read the Information sheet.

NATION OF PRISONERS

(Information sheet 26, Activity sheet 26)

! Preliminary activity

(Before handing out the **Nation of prisoners** information sheet)

Class exercise:

Ask the pupils what a **Model village** or **Model town** would mean to them (i.e. in the UK).

To read out or distribute to pupils: **You have been asked to design a 'model' village or town. In a group:**

a) Make a list of all the things you would expect to find in a 'model' village or town
b) Write down the names of some of the streets in your village or town
c) Design a sign, with a message, for the entrance to the village

The class should then make a complete list of all of the things you would expect to find in your village or town on the board.

Then gradually cross off the 'attractive' things on the list, so that only houses, meeting house, school and health centre remain. Add any of these if they are missing and also electricity and water. Then add the following: army checkpoint or base; watchtower; barriers at the village entrance with guards; flagpole. Add the sign 'Antisubversive village, ideologically new' and tell the pupils not to worry about understanding it, as no one does. Three of the street names will be Development Avenue, Liberty Street and Avenue of the Guatemalan Soldier.

Note also that the inhabitants will attend a parade two or three times a day, in the square, and that they must learn the hymn to the Guatemalan soldier and the national anthem.

Class or group: Discuss any points which arise and decide for whom the villages can be seen as 'model'.

This then leads into reading the **Nation of prisoners** information sheet and doing the other activities on the **Nation of prisoners** activity sheet.

IN HOPE OF RETURNING

This role play could be performed in groups before **or** after reading the information sheets **In hope of returning**.

Leaving home: Journey into the unknown

The cards listed under **Stage 3** should be ready to hand to pupils.

The village nearby has been attacked by the army. You know that it won't be long before your village is attacked. You decide that it is no longer safe to live there. You are about to set off

on a journey which will take many days and there will be much hardship.

Stage 1 You should start by thinking about what you would take with you as a reminder of your past life. The journey will be long and difficult so be realistic.

Stage 2 Think of the sorts of dangers you will have to face. What sorts of decisions do you think you will have to make? The land is mountainous. How will that affect you? Is the whole village travelling together? Are you going in small groups? What about food and water?

Stage 3 You should plan a role play of your journey. Each group should get one of the following cards with an additional piece of information to take into account. (The card may mention a particular person. Someone may play that person in the drama if you wish, or you could just imagine that they are part of the group.)

CARDS:

Card A: Your group includes an old person
Card B: Your group includes a pregnant woman
Card C: Your group includes a small child who is sick
Card D: Someone goes to look for water and a helicopter spots them
Card E: There are screams and shouts from a settlement nearby.

Stage 4 You have to decide what happens on your journey and whether you reach safety. Show your drama to the whole class and watch the other groups. You should discuss as a class the problems faced by each group and how the problems were handled.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

THE BREAKDOWN OF MAYAN CULTURE

It is important to note that the *traje* (pronounced trakay) or traditional clothing of the Maya is worn less today for a number of reasons, many relating directly to repression. This will have an effect on the rate of breakdown of the community. For women to change their style of dress and cut their hair is seen as giving up their identity and culture. However, many Maya are now changing their style of dress, but not through choice. It is for these reasons:

1 The design and colours of the *traje* identify the villages from which people come
2 The traditional way of life is not respected in the model villages in which many are now forced to live
3 Many, especially men, wear western-style clothes to escape harassment and prejudice
4 Many ready-made fabrics are available which make producing clothing cheaper
5 Women can make some money for necessary essentials by selling their own hand-woven clothing to tourists.

Tourism is an important industry in Guatemala and the image of the welcoming, passive indigenous people appears in all of the publicity. This is in sharp contrast to the reality of most Guatemalans' lives.

Language is an important ingredient in the preservation of culture. It is with this in mind that the National Plan of Security and Development has deliberately targeted teaching in Spanish to Mayan children and thereby seeks to destroy the strength and vitality of the Mayan culture. It proposes:

'... to ensure that programmes to reduce the level of illiteracy be carried out in order to make the population more receptive to new ideas and to increase the effectiveness of actions taken to create nationalism and maintain it.'
(Source: Jim Handy from *Central America* edited by J L Flora and E Torres-Rivas, London: Macmillan, 1989)

The civil patrols in which the Maya have to take part are breaking down the sense of community. On an individual level men are more macho than before and less inclined to help each other. Villages are encouraged to identify with the 'Guatemalan Nation' by displaying the Guatemalan flag, singing the national anthem etc. Civil patrol rallies take place on traditional feast days with beauty contests such as Miss Civil Patrol, Miss Military Zone, with pressure put on young Mayan women to take part, very much against the cultural tradition.

See the Minority Rights Group profile for further information on the repression of the Maya

FURTHER◆ INFORMATION

Maya
The Guatemalan Indian Centre
94a Wandsworth Bridge Road
London SW6 2TF
071 371 5291

Guatemala Committee for Human Rights
83 Margaret Street
London W1N 7HB
071 631 4200

Latin America Bureau
1 Amwell Street
London EC1R 1UL
071 278 2829

Catholic Institute for International Relations
Unit 3, Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road
Islington
London N1 7BJ
071 354 0883

The Library
Canning House
2 Belgrave Square
London SW1
071 235 2303

('The Missing' tape-slide programme is available for hire from GCHR. In it, the powerful Ruben Blades song *The Missing* is accompanied by slides of line drawings. It may be produced as a video in 1992.)

◆ANSWERS

RECORDS OF THE PAST

Glyphs (Activity sheet 6)
A = coming to power of
B = warfare
C = death of

KEEP OUR SECRETS

Birth customs (Activity sheet 12)
A4 B1 C6 D8 E2 F5 G7 H3

BECOMING AN ADULT

Rights and responsibilities (Activity sheet 13)
Cigarettes: 16
Alcohol: 18
Jury service: 18
Drive: 17
Vote: 18
Leave school: 16
Marry: 16
Become an MP: 21
Passport: any age

WOVEN PICTURES

(Activity sheet 14)
A Peacock
B Horse
C Dog
D Deer
E People
F Corn

16

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AMERICAS WATCH COMMITTEE – **Civil Patrols in Guatemala**. New York: Americas Watch Committeee, 1986

AMERICAS WATCH COMMITTEE – **Persecuting Human Rights Monitors: the CERJ in Guatemala**. New York: Americas Watch Committee, 1989.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – **Guatemala: the Human Rights Record**. (AMR 34/04/87). London: Amnesty International Publications, 1987.

ARCHER, David and COSTELLO, Patrick – **Literacy and Power: the Latin American Battleground**. London: Earthscan, 1990.

Bitter and Cruel: report of a mission to Guatemala by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group. London: PHRG, 1984

BRONSTEIN, Audrey – **The Triple Struggle: Latin American Peasant Women**. London: War on Want Campaigns, 1982

CASTILLO, Otto Rene – **Let's Go!** London: Cape Goliard Press, 1976.

Comment: Guatemala. London: CIIR, 1988.

COE, Michael and others – **Atlas of Ancient America**. Oxford: Facts on File, 1986

COE, Michael D. – **The Maya.** 3rd ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.

DEUSS, Krystyna – **Indian Costumes from Guatemala**. [London]: Krystyna Deuss, 1981.

*EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA COMMITTEES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – **Guatemala: Awareness and the Community: the Role of Education and the Church**. (Development and Human Rights in Central America.) London: El Salvador and Guatemala Human Rights Committees, n.d.

*EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA COMMITTEES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – **Guatemala: Land and City: Organization for Social Justice**. (Development and Human Rights in Central America.) London: El Salvador and Guatemala Human Rights Committes, n.d.

Guatemalan Children Today. Mexico: Guatemalan Human Rights Commission, 1986.

Human Rights in Guatemala: 1989. Guatemala: ProJustice and Peace Committee of Guatemala, 1990.

***I, Rigoberta: the story of an Indian Woman from Guatemala**: An Abridged Version...Adapted for Young Readers. London: El Salvador and Guatemala Human Rights Committees, n.d.

KITA, Bernice – **What Prize Awaits Us: Letters from Guatemala**. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

LANDA, Friar Diego de – **Yucatán: Before and After the Conquest**. Translated with Notes by William Gates. New York: Dover Publications, 1978.

MANZ, Beatriz – **Refugees of a Hidden War: the Aftermath of Counterinsurgency in Guatemala**. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

MENCHU, Rigoberta – **I, Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian Woman in Guatemala**. London: Verso, 1984.

NELSON, Craig and TAYLOR, Kenneth – **Witness to Genocide: The Present Situation of Indians in Guatemala**. London: Survival International, 1983.

OAKES, Maud – **Beyond a Windy Place**. London: Victor Gollancz, 1951.

PAINTER, James – **Guatemala: False Hope, False Freedom: The Rich, the Poor and the Christian Democrats**. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations and Latin American Bureau, 1987

ROYS R L – **The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel**. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

SIMON, Jean-Marie – **Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny**. New York: W W Norton & Co,1987.

TEDLOCK, Dennis (Trans) – **Popol Vuh**. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.

We Ask Why They Are Hungry – London: Christian Aid and CAFOD.

WEARNE, Phillip & CALVERT, Peter – **The Maya of Guatemala**. (Minority Rights Group Report.) London: Minority Rights Group, 1989.

WRIGHT,Ronald – **Time Among the Maya: Travels in Belize, Guatemala and Mexico**. London: Bodley Head, 1989

**pupil level material*

◆SOURCES

INFORMATION BOOK

4 'We have always...' R Menchu p.1
6 'After the earth...' Maya-Mam diary 1991
8 'The prayers usually...' R Menchu
11 'Let no landowner...' R Menchu p.12
'I can't tell...' *ibid* p.20
16 'Yes my country...' A Bronstein p.206
17 'Who is it...' *ibid* p.20
'Dear Mom and...' B Kita p.21
18 Facts Minority Rights Group Report and J Painter
'They simply cannot...' *ibid* p.24
'Mothers carry their...' B Kita p.56
'When I asked...' *ibid* p.57
19 'I don't want...' A Bronstein p.260
'Maybe my baby...' B Kita p.90
'When I left...' A Bronstein p.215
'I still remember...' Guatenoticias, June 1989
22 'There was no...' R Roys p.83
'These people also...' Landa
24 'My poor, poor...' Cultural Survival Quarterly V10, 4 p.54
'Man loses his...' R O Castillo
Table Statistical Yearbook for Latin America & Caribbean, CEPAL, 1989
25 'People tell me...' R Wright p.6
'At first they...' Chasqui May 1991
'They act as...' B Kita p.95
'They treat us...' *ibid*
'The first Mayan...' D Archer p.137
'In a lot...' *ibid* p.135
'What hurts us...' R Menchu p.204
26 'What do we...' B Manz p. 204
27 'This is what...' Americas Watch Civil Patrols p.67
'They're voluntary...' *ibid*
'Every morning at...' *ibid*
Table *ibid* p.51
28 'We've learned...' J Painter p.117
30 'We want to...' Central America Report No 36 p.10
'Mr President...' B Manz p.212
'The children were...' Guatemalan Children Today p.71
33 'You lift up...' Americas Civil Watch Patrols p.1
'Pedro left here...' B Kita p.225
'They are killing...' *ibid* p.17
34 'I decided to...' Central America Report No 44 p.4
35 'After all our...' Pro Justice & Peace Committee 1989 p.78
37 'Remember us after...' R Menchu p.188 (Translation from Maya-Mam diary 1991)

ACTIVITY BOOK

7 'They anointed with...' Landa p.78
10 'Heart of the Sky...' R Menchu p.57
17 'I was hungry...' We Ask Why They Are Hungry
23 'The soldiers flew...' C W Nelson p.19
25 Visit to the doctor B Kita p.94
'They've always said...' R Menchu p.57
27 'You can either...' Americas Watch Civil Patrols p.63
'The patrols are...' Central America Report No 44 p.4

Please note that many quotes are just attributed to 'a Maya'. This is because people wish to remain anonymous for their own safety.

The **Minority Rights Group** was founded in the 1960s. Its principal aim is to secure justice for minority (and non-dominant majority) groups suffering discrimination by:

◆ Researching, publishing and distribution the facts as widely as possible to raise public knowledge and awareness of minority issues world wide

◆ Advocating and publicising all aspects of the human rights of minorities to draw attention to violations and to aid the prevention of dangerous and destructive conflicts;

◆ Educating, through its research, publications and schools programme, on issues relating to prejudice, discrimination and group conflicts.

The Minority Rights Group published its Report *'The Maya of Guatemala'* in 1989.

'We have always lived here: we have the right to go on living where we are happy and where we want to die.' POPUL VUH

Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492 – 500 years ago. For the indigenous peoples of Latin America, however, there has been no reason to celebrate the anniversary.

'We Have Always Lived Here' tells the story of one of these peoples – the Maya of Guatemala. In this extensively trialled pack pupils can discover, through a rich variety of material, the splendours of Mayan history and civilisation. The pack covers Mayan culture and daily life as well as the discrimination experienced by the Maya and the fight for human rights in Guatemala.

With an initial unit designed specifically to support History National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 2, ***'We Have Always Lived Here'*** also supports National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 2 and 3 in English, Religious Education and the Cross Curricular themes of Citizenship, Economic and Industrial Understanding and Health Education. Containing a wealth of activities designed for mixed ability classes, the pack can also be used for Modern Studies teaching in Scotland, as well as for teaching about human rights, prejudice and racism.

CONTENTS

Information Book
Pupils' Activity Book
Teachers' Notes
Notre Dame School Booklet
MRG Profile Leaflet
20 Photocards

The material in this pack may be reproduced *for classroom use only*.

'It's a super pack with enormous potential.' Lynne Broadbent, Head of South London Multi-Faith Religious Education Centre

'Links key ideas about Guatemala to the pupils' own experiences. Contains an excellent range of active learning approaches – games, simulations, brainstorming activities, diamond ranking, group work, etc.' Dougie McKenzie, Scottish Development Education Centre, Edinburgh

'I have learnt a lot from this project. Before this I never even knew the Maya existed. I would like to do this sort of work again and I recommend the project to other people.' Year 9 pupil, Boundstone Community College, Sussex

'The students enjoyed playing the packs and found the work stimulating and interesting. There were many excellent features of the pack.' David Tombs, Humanities and English teacher, Lampton School, Middlesex

Published October 1991
ISBN 0-946690-85-5

Minority Rights Group
379 Brixton Road
London SW9 7DE
United Kingdom

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA

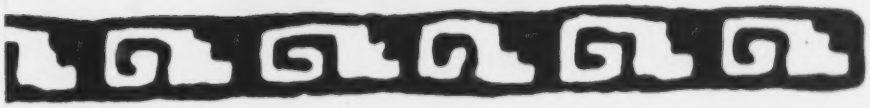
BY MARGARET BURR
EDITED BY RACHEL WARNER

AN ACTIVE LEARNING PACK
FOR KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

INFORMATION BOOK

23

FACTS ABOUT GUATEMALA



Area
42,000 square miles

Population
8.9 million
65% Maya
35% *ladino* (mixed Spanish and Maya descent)

Capital
Guatemala City

Money
8 *Quetzals* = £1.00
100 *Centavos* = 1 *Quetzal*

Language
There are 22 languages spoken by the 22 groups of Maya. Spanish is the official language.

Religion
70% Roman Catholic
30% Protestant and Evangelical.

Land
80% of the farmland is owned by 2% of the population. 98% of Mayans live on plots of land which are too small to keep a family.

Resources
Guatemala has the richest resources of land, mineral and oil deposits in Central America. 90% of its industry is controlled by foreign companies.

Main exports
Coffee, bananas, sugar, cotton, beef and oil.

Living conditions
Only 50% of the population have access to drinking water. Only 34% of the population have access to health services.

Life expectancy
Maya male - 41 years. Maya female - 45 years. *Ladino* male - 57 years. *Ladino* female - 61 years.

Education
92% of the population have not gone to secondary school.

Cover photo by Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre

CONTENTS

Map 2

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

We have always lived here 4
Records of the past 5
People of maize 6
Counting the days 7
Maize 8
Everyday lives 9
To be Maya 10
Keep our secrets 11
Becoming an adult 12
Woven pictures 13
What we wear 14

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY

Journey to the *finca* 16
Cry for land 17
In sickness and in health 18
Pablo's dream 19
Teaching my people 20

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Then the Spanish came 22
Finding a voice 23
Guatemala... killing fields 24
Bitter and cruel... 25
Nation of prisoners 26
Patrolling the countryside 27
In hope of returning: 28
Refugees 28
Refugee camps in Mexico 29
Exile 30

D THE MISSING

The Missing 32
Disappearances 33
Speaking out 34
CERJ 34
CONAVIGUA 35
GAM 36
Tell as many people as you can 37

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA

BY MARGARET BURR
EDITED BY RACHEL WARNER

2

Area enlarged
Equator
50 miles
50 kilometres
BELIZE
Tikal
Belmopan
Flores
Benampak
MEXICO
Puerto Barrios
Lago de Izabal
Copan
Where the Maya live in Guatemala
Archaeological sites
Quezaltenango
HONDURAS
Guatemala City
Mazatenango
Antigua
Tegucigalpa
PACIFIC OCEAN
San Salvador
GUATEMALA
EL SALVADOR

USA
GULF OF MEXICO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CUBA
YUCATAN
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
MEXICO
TABASCO
NORTH
JAMAICA
BELIZE
HONDURAS
HAITI
CHIAPAS
CARIBBEAN SEA
GUATEMALA
NICARAGUA
EL SALVADOR
PANAMA
PACIFIC OCEAN
COSTA RICA
VENEZUELA
500 miles
800 kilometres
COLOMBIA

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

We have always lived here 4
Records of the past 5
People of maize 6
Counting the days 7
Maize 8
Everyday lives 9
To be Maya 10
Keep our secrets 11
Becoming an adult 12
Woven pictures 13
What we wear 14

4

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

More than a hundred ancient Mayan cities have been found, though some are still hidden in the jungle. One of the oldest and most impressive is Tikal, the City of Whispers. Tikal contains many pyramid-like buildings. These are temples and palaces which are decorated with grand staircases, sculptures and altars and are very tall - to reach up to the heavens. As well as temples and palaces, there was also usually a huge ball court in Mayan cities.

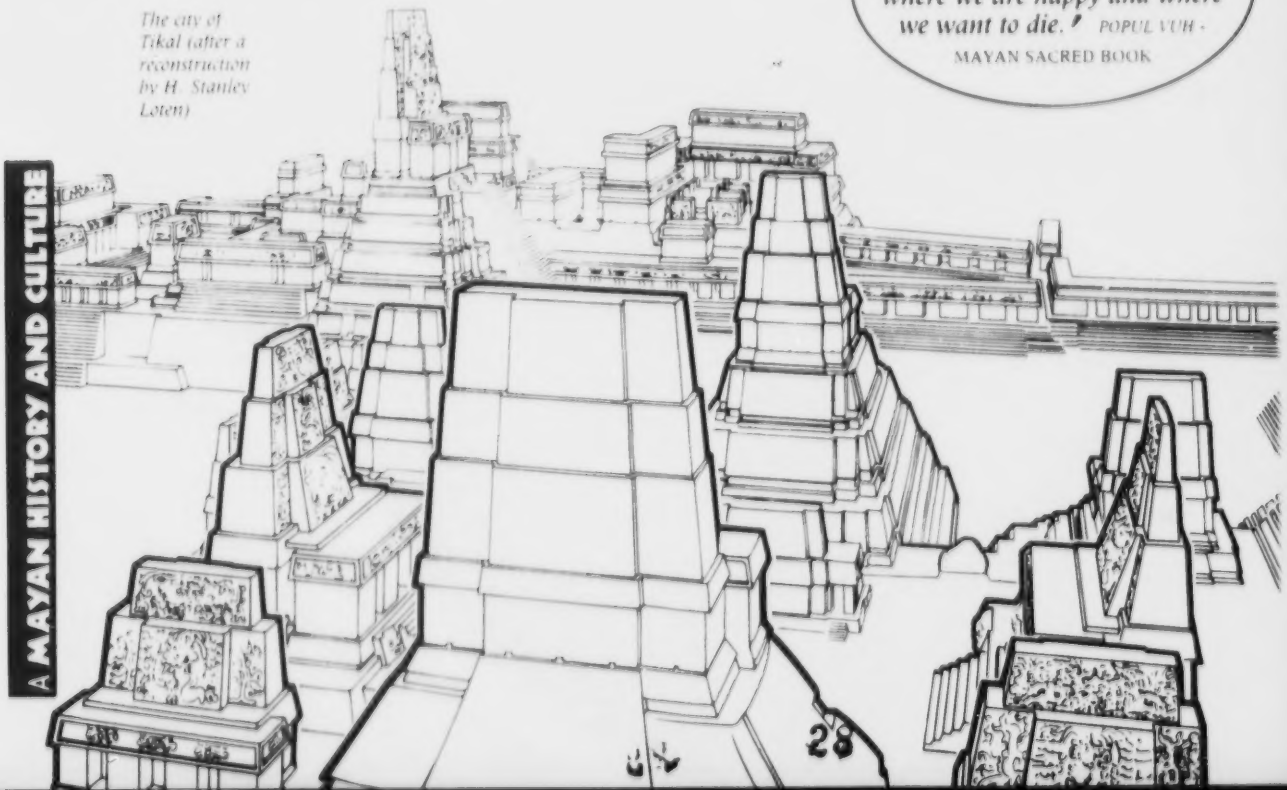
These cities were important centres of government and religion. The ruler lived there with many of his nobles. The nobles held all of the important posts for governing the people. They controlled trade and some of them became priests. The priests organised the ceremonies and festivals in the cities. Wide stone roads connected the cities. These were used to trade goods such as cotton, salt and honey. Trade also took place along the Yucatán coast and with the Caribbean islands.

The Maya have lived for centuries in their beautiful land. Their civilisation was one of the greatest ever, with magnificent cities, wonderful sculptures and writing. They had religious festivals with music and dancing. At these festivals their leaders wore colourful clothes decorated with the bright feathers of their sacred bird, the *quetzal*. The Maya studied the stars and time. They carved their work on stone monuments known as stelae.

This was at the time known as the Classic period, when the civilisation was at its greatest. The Classic period was from about AD 250 - 900.

'We have always lived here: we have the right to go on living where we are happy and where we want to die.' POPUL VUH - MAYAN SACRED BOOK

The city of Tikal (after a reconstruction by H. Stanley Loten)



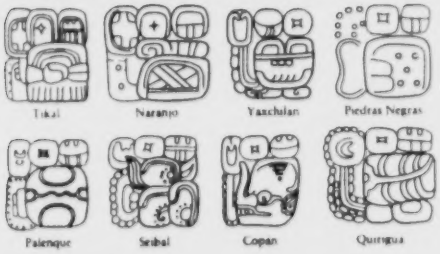
5

RECORDS OF THE PAST

The Maya were the only people in the Americas at that time to develop a complete system of writing. It was a form of picture writing called hieroglyphics. Each glyph or picture had a different meaning.

The glyphs are very complicated and there are many that we still do not understand.

These are the glyphs for each of the important ancient Mayan cities:

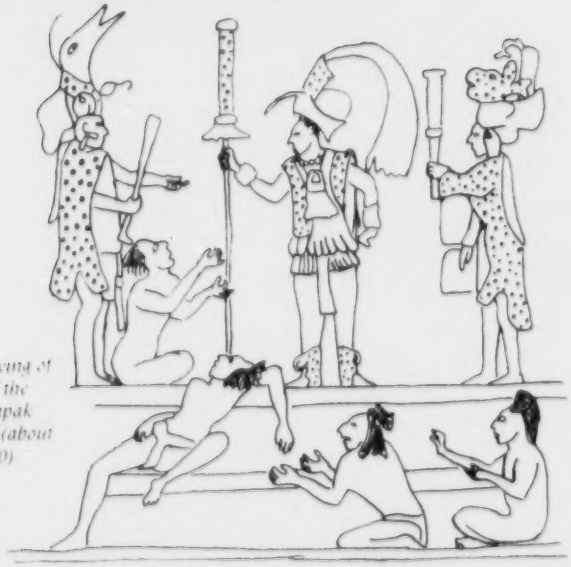


(From 'Atlas of Ancient America' p.119)

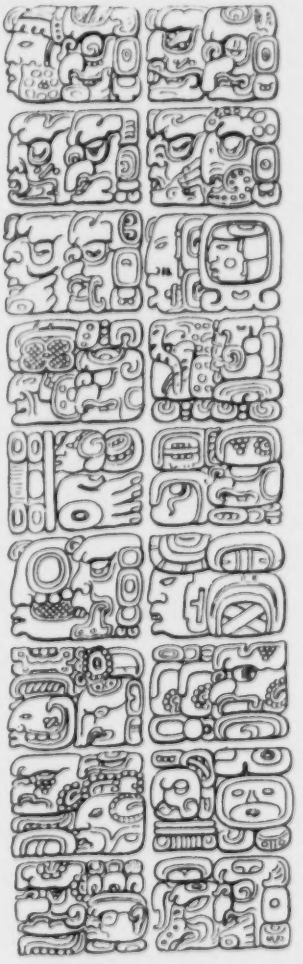
The Maya also made books called codices, which contain glyphs and drawings. These were made of tree bark which was soaked and pulped. They are very large because the bark was folded like a fan and not cut into pages. One codex is over 23 feet in length. Unfortunately only three codices are left. They are now in museums in Europe. All of the rest were lost over the years.

We have been able to learn about the Maya and how they lived through their glyphs. These were painted on pots, or carved on buildings or stelae*. The stelae record the births, marriages and deaths of the ruling families. They also show scenes from daily life and the Mayan myths. The priests, the scribes*, and the nobles who knew how to write, looked after the stelae and all Mayan learning.

In Mayan paintings, like the drawing of one below from Bonampak, the people have high, flattened foreheads. The Maya thought that a high, flattened forehead was a sign of great beauty, so mothers flattened their babies' heads when they were tiny.



A drawing of part of the Bonampak mural (about AD 800)



A stela (drawn after Maudsley)

* **stelae** = carved stone monuments
scribe = someone who wrote things down

6

PEOPLE OF MAIZE

God of Maize

A Mayan creation myth from the *Popul Vuh**

First came the earth, then the mountains, rivers and forests. But there was no sun and everything was dark. Animals came next and each was told where to live: the lions and tigers in the mountains, the birds in the trees, the fish in the sea, just as they live today. But none of the animals could talk so the Gods decided to create people.

The first people were made of mud, but they were soft and collapsed at the touch of water. So the Gods decided to make the second set of people, this time of wood. They were stronger but they still didn't have any feelings or understanding, so the Gods sent a great flood and they were all drowned. The third time the Gods tried to make people from the plants and trees but without success. Some of these beings escaped and became the monkeys we see today.

The Gods decided to have yet another go, this time using maize. Ixmucane, the grandmother of the Gods, ground the maize into a paste and from this the first four true men were formed. Women were then created and there were soon many people on the earth. There were people of different colours, speaking many different languages.

The earth was still cold and dark, so the Gods made fire next. Finally the sun came with the moon and stars, and the animals and human beings sang their thanks to the Gods.

Bacabs (drawn after Thompson)

The Maya had hundreds of Gods. Their supreme God was Itzamna, Lord of the Heavens. They believed that there were 13 heavens and nine underworlds, each with its own God. They thought that the sky was held up by Gods called the Bacabs and by the sacred ceiba tree.

Ceiba tree

At their many ceremonies and festivals for the Gods, the Maya usually made plant and animal offerings, in the hope that the Gods would protect them. If there was a plague, war or lack of rain, the Maya offered human sacrifices. The Maya needed rain for a good harvest and one way to ask Chac, the Lord of the Rains, for help was to burn incense. They believed that when he saw the smoke he would send his helpers with water to pour through the storm clouds.

Mayan prayer

After the earth was formed
it was divided in four:
red, black, white and yellow;
east, west, north and south.

And they knew everything
and saw everything
in the four corners of the sky
in the four corners of the earth
and all that was in the sky
and all that was in the earth.

Same prayer in Main-Maya

jas uʒakatiɓeshik ri uwach ulew
ri kajiɓ uwachiɓal
ri kajiɓ utasiɓal:
kyak, ◊ek, sak ◊an,
releɓal ◊ij, kajɓal ◊ij
releɓal kiki◊, kajɓal kiki◊

Shetòtaj ƙu che uxoɓik ronojel
shuk che rilik ronojel
pa ri kajiɓ tux kaj
pa ri kajiɓ ƙux ulew
chi'l ri ƙo chilpam ri kaj
ri ƙo chipam ri ulew

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

* ***Popul Vuh*** = Mayan sacred book

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COUNTING THE DAYS

The Maya loved numbers and enjoyed looking at the night sky. Their knowledge of numbers was 2000 years ahead of Europe. They used only three symbols:

a shell for 0 a dot for 1 a bar for 5

Through their studies of the night sky they were able to tell the movements of the sun, moon and the planet Venus. These studies were important for keeping records of time. The Maya developed three calendars. The life of the Maya still revolves around these calendars.

The three calendars are:
1. The Long Count
2. The Sacred Round or 260-day count
3. The 'Vague Year'

1. The 'Long Count' calendar is for recording historical events. It was developed from an older calendar. It can be used to calculate as far back as 5000 years ago. It is made up of five kinds of time cycles:

kin = 1 day
uinal = 20 days
tun = 360 days or 18 months of 20 days
katun = 7200 days or 20 years
baktun = 144,000 days

2. The 'Sacred Round' is the religious calendar used to decide the days of festivals and important events such as when the maize will be sown and harvested. The luck of each day is calculated by using the calendar. Each day in the 13 months of 20 days is given a name as well as a number, so each day is different. These are some of the names in one of the Mayan languages:

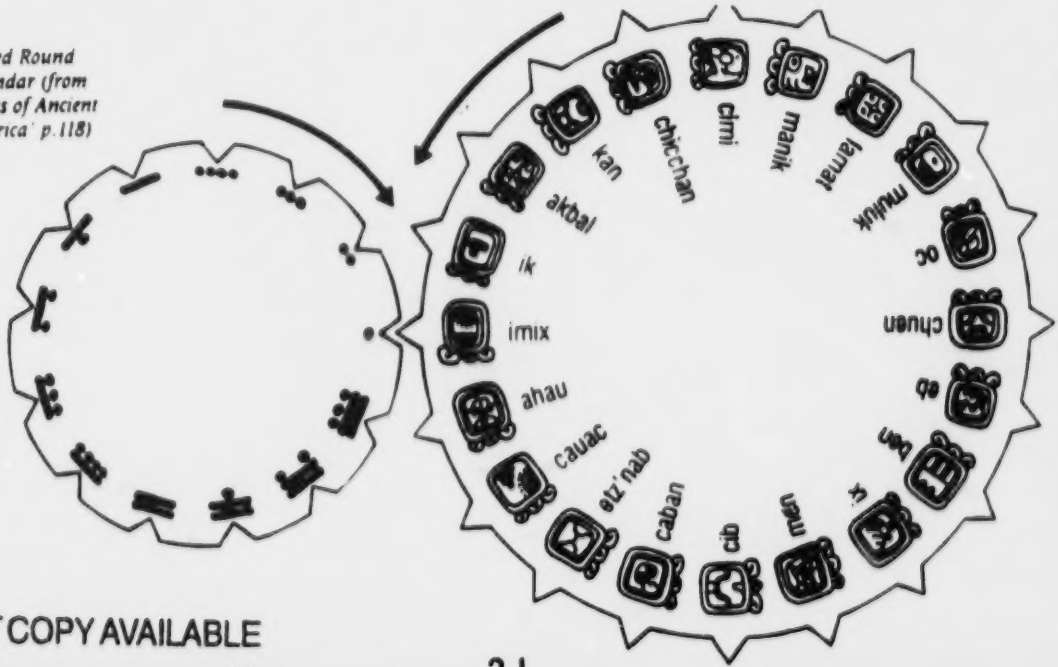
Mayan Yucatec	**English**
Ix	jaguar or maize
Men	bird or moon
Cib	soul or insect
Caban	earthquake or season

These are some examples of days:

•••• *Ix* — *Men* ▁•▁ *Cib* ▁••▁ *Caban*

3. The 'Vague Year' is a round of 360 days with 5 extra Uayeb or unlucky days at the end of the year.

Sacred Round Calendar (from 'Atlas of Ancient America' p.118)



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

8

MAIZE

Maize, or corn on the cob, is the main Mayan food. Growing maize is very important in the life of the Maya. All the Mayan festivals are to do with maize.

CYCLE OF HARVEST

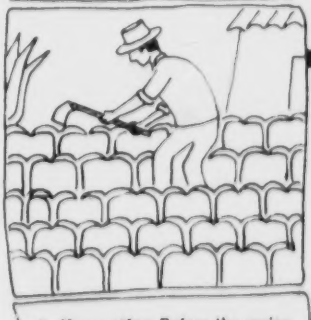
1. Before sowing The fields are prepared for sowing. The people bring the biggest seeds they have saved from last year's harvest. They say prayers for a good crop and light candles in their houses.

'The prayers usually ask the earth for permission to plant our crops at the sowing time, to give us a good harvest, and then to give thanks with all our might.'

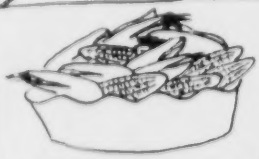
RIGOBERTA MENCHU, A MAYAN WOMAN

2. Sowing The seeds are sown after the rains. Everyone takes part. The men sow maize and beans, the women sow pumpkins and the children sow potatoes and other vegetables.

3. Taking care of the maize Everyone watches over the seeds. Later they protect the young maize plants from animals. They build up the earth around the plants to stop the wind from knocking them over. When the first leaves grow, they are cut and there is a *fiesta**.



4. Harvesting Before the maize cobs have been harvested, there is a ceremony of thanks to the earth and God. The Maya ask for permission to cut the maize. There are celebrations after the maize has been collected.



COOKING

The Maya today prepare the maize in exactly the same way as they did hundreds of years ago. They even use the same equipment.

The women rub the kernels of maize from the cob. They soak them overnight in a clay pot of water and dissolved lime. They rinse the kernels. Then they grind them by using a stone grinder which is passed on from mother to daughter. This makes the flour.

The maize flour is made into little balls for the tortillas, or maize pancakes. They are cooked over a wood fire.

* ***fiesta*** = party

EVERYDAY LIVES

The everyday lives of the Maya are almost the same today as they were in the past. The Maya are an independent and self-sufficient* people. They grow and process their own food, make their own pots and clothes and build their own houses.

Women washing

WATER

For water the Maya often have to depend on rivers which are some distance from where they live. Women carry water back to their houses in large containers on their heads.

People wash their clothes in the river as they always have done. The people may also wash themselves there or at home, using their *temascals* if they have one. These are steam baths, where water is thrown onto hot stones, just like the saunas of Scandinavia.

Man with mecapal

HOUSES

There are some large towns in Guatemala but most of the Maya live in villages in the countryside. The villages are very spread out because the Maya live near their *milpa* (maizefield) so that they can take care of the crop. This has always been the way.

The house usually only has one room. It is made of *adobe** or cane with a steep roof to keep the rain out. There is space outside for animals and for growing small amounts of vegetables.

Mayan house (Photos by Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre)

GOING TO MARKET

Going to market is an important part of life. Market day is when people can get together, share news and sell products they have made or grown at home. Many women weave cloth or make small mats and pots to earn money. A two- or three-hour walk to market is common, so people do not go to every market day. One person in the village may buy or sell for the others.

A worker taking pots to sell at the market will carry them himself, using a *mecapal* (a strap over his forehead). In this way heavy weights can be carried more easily. Women carry their babies on their backs and their goods on their heads.

* **self-sufficient** = doing everything themselves, not having to rely on others.
adobe = mud

10

TO BE MAYA

The Mayan culture emphasises the community. This has helped them to survive to the present day.

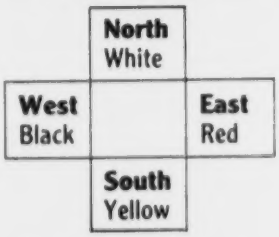
PEOPLE AND NATURE

Land is very important in the life and culture of the Mayan people. Land is sacred*. The Maya live in harmony with the natural world, and treat it with respect. To the Maya, land is free, like air. The Maya ask how can the earth, sky and water belong to anyone? Water too is sacred because it is pure and clean and life-giving.

MAIZE

The Maya call themselves the people of maize. Maize (or corn on the cob) is central to Mayan life. The Maya believe that the first people were made from maize. Eating maize is an important part of being Mayan. Community life centres around the growing, harvesting and cooking of maize. Maize grows easily and is very nutritious* so it is a very valuable food.

To the Maya, the shape of the cross has always been a symbol for the four corners of the earth.



Each direction has a different colour. The four sacred colours are thought to come from the different colours of maize.

THE MILPA

The *milpa* is the small plot of land farmed by each family. It has always been a right for everyone to have a *milpa*, so that everyone can grow their own food. The Maya always grow maize on the *milpa*. They also grow other food plants such as beans, herbs, and plants for healing. People live near their *milpa* so they can protect the crops and weed the land.

COMMUNITY

For the Maya it is very important to live together with other people, as part of a community. This includes the family, school and church. People wear different clothes depending on the village they come from. The villages cover a wide area, as people need to live near the fields they work in. However they come together often for meetings and *fiestas**.

* ***fiesta*** = party
sacred = holy
nutritious = good for you

KEEP OUR SECRETS

People throughout the world have different customs*. These customs are important in preserving* the way of life of the people.

BIRTH CEREMONIES

These are the customs to do with birth for one of the Mayan groups:

A Mother says she is pregnant

B Neighbours visit every day and bring small gifts

C Mother introduces the unborn baby to the world around

D Two other couples are present at the birth

E Mother and baby spend eight days alone together

G There are celebrations as the baby is introduced to all

H Baby is baptised after 40 days

F Baby is in new bed with candles at the corners

> *'I can't tell you what my nahual is because that is one of our secrets.'* RIGOBERTA MENCHU, A YOUNG MAYAN WOMAN

Both the child's family and the village leaders promise to teach the ways of the past to the child. In this way the child gradually learns the culture* of the Maya.

This is one of the prayers said at the child's baptism:

'Let no landowner extinguish all this, nor any rich man wipe out our customs. Let our children, be they workers or servants, respect and keep our secrets.'

NAHUAL*

The Maya believe every child is born with a *'nahual'*. This is a spirit which helps to protect the person during their life. A person's *nahual* depends on the day that they were born. The *nahual* is usually an animal. People only tell the child what it's *nahual* is when it is 10 years old. This is because the Maya feel it is important that a person develop their own character rather than be influenced by the character of their *nahual*. They are afraid that a child who is stubborn like a bull might use their *nahual* as an excuse for bad behaviour.

*
custom = traditional way of doing things
preserving = keeping alive, keeping going
culture = shared way of life
nahual — pronounced nakwaal

12

BECOMING ◆AN◆ ADULT

Rigoberta Menchú, a young Mayan woman, talks about becoming an adult. She tells us about the most important birthdays in her life:

RIGOBERTA at the age of ten... *'My parents explained what an adult's life is like. They said that my life wouldn't change, it would go on the same – work, poverty, suffering. They thanked me for the contribution I'd made through my work, for having earned for all of us. I was bought a completely new set of clothes and told that it is important to wear the complete costume from then on. There was an important meeting with the family and community, and they talked about the responsibilities of adult life. Suddenly they all treated me like an adult.'*

Mayan girl weaving (photo by Krystyna Deuss/Maya Centre)

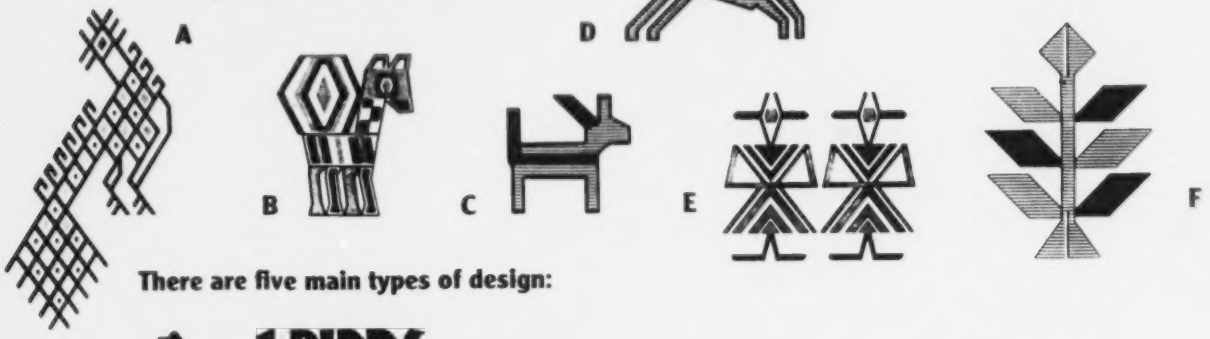
RIGOBERTA at the age of twelve... *'I remember when I was 12, my father gave me a little pig. I was also given two little chickens and a lamb, and they also had a fiesta* for me. The animals were not to be touched or sold without my permission. The idea is for a child to start looking after its own needs. I had to find food for them myself. So what I used to do was, after work in the fields, I'd come back home at six or seven in the evening, do all my jobs in the house for the next morning, and then at about nine o'clock I'd start weaving. I'd sell the pieces of cloth and buy maize or other little things for my pigs to eat.'*

* ***fiesta*** = party

WOVEN PICTURES

The same basic designs are woven into different patterns on Mayan clothes. These designs have been important in preserving* the symbols of the ancient Mayan civilisation.

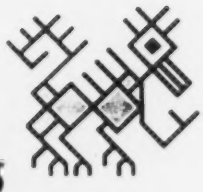
These are some of the designs:



There are five main types of design:

1 BIRDS

There is a Mayan story that the Sun God, while he was courting the Moon Goddess, turned himself into a beautiful bright hummingbird to flutter around the plants in the courtyard where she was weaving.

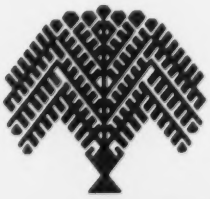


2 ANIMALS

The monkey appears in the *Popul Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya, and in dances performed at festivals today.

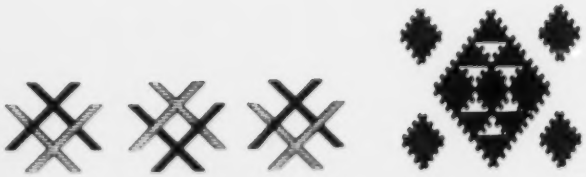
3 FIGURES

Sometimes figures appear with their arms stretched out. These may represent the Bacabs, the Mayan Gods who hold up the sky.



4 PLANTS AND FLOWERS

Plants and trees decorate many pieces of clothing. They may represent the ceiba, the sacred tree of the Maya.



5 GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

(Designs from "Indian Costumes from Guatemala")

* **preserving** = keeping alive, keeping going

14

WHAT WE WEAR

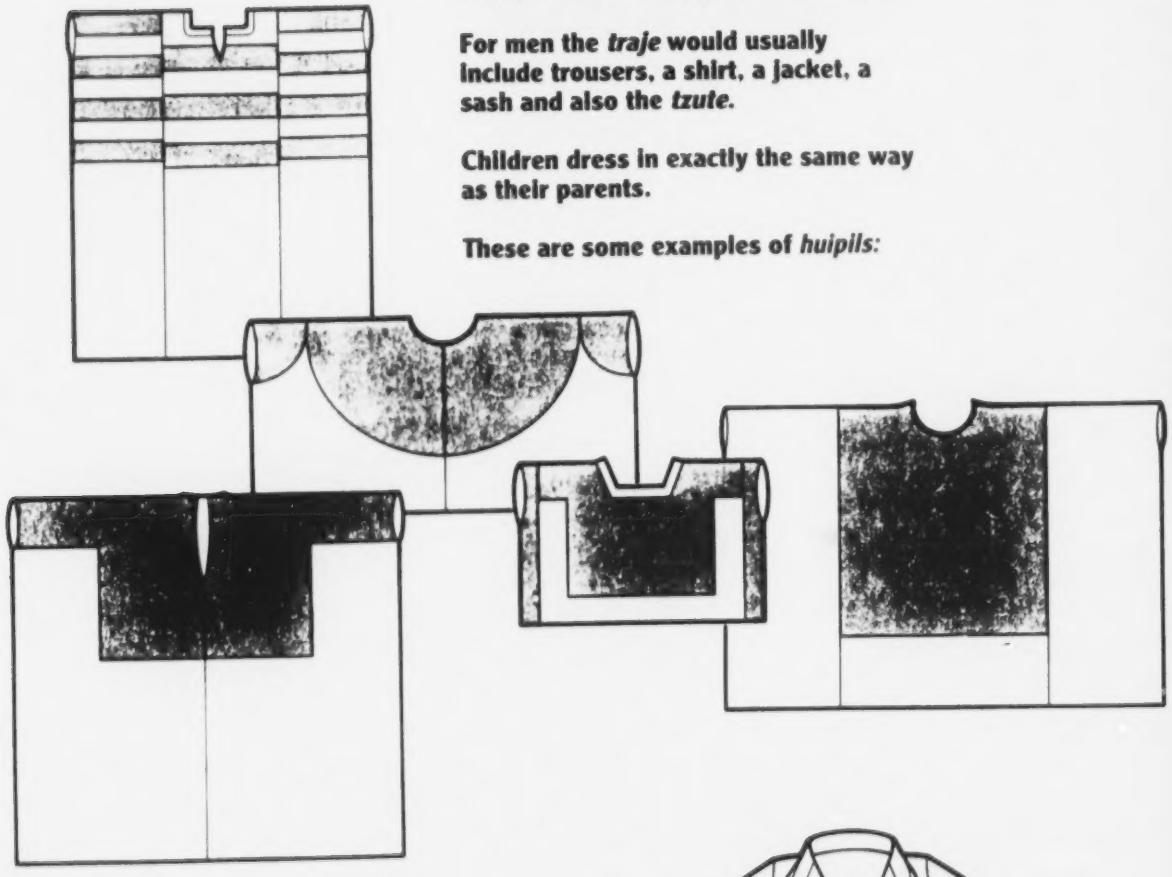
The *traje** are the traditional clothes of the Maya. They are hand woven and worn every day, not just on special days. The *traje* is different in different areas of Guatemala.

For women the *traje* would include a skirt, a blouse or *huipil** and a sash. The women also wear a *tzute*, which is a piece of cloth. This is used as a shawl, to carry things, as protection for the head or simply as a decoration.

For men the *traje* would usually include trousers, a shirt, a jacket, a sash and also the *tzute*.

Children dress in exactly the same way as their parents.

These are some examples of *huipils:*



These are some examples of jackets:

(From 'Indian Costumes from Guatemala')

* ***traje*** — pronounced trakay
huipil — pronounced weepeel

15

B

FAIR OR UNFAIR? ◆ LIFE TODAY

Journey to the *finca* **16**
Cry for land **17**
In sickness and in health **18**
Pablo's dream **19**
Teaching my people **20**

16

JOURNEY TO THE FINCA*

Every year thousands of the Maya travel from the mountains to work on the coffee, cotton or sugar *fincas*.

"Yes, my country is very beautiful, but the truth of the way people live here is very ugly."
CECILIA, A TEACHER

Seasonal workers* are 70% of the agricultural workforce.

Half a million people migrate* to *fincas* each year.

The journey may take two days by truck.

Transport to the *fincas* is in covered trucks, with no light or air.

No one has a proper toilet or running water.

There are a lot of diseases on the coast.

Some workers are not paid at all but 'given' a patch of land to grow food to live on.

If a worker breaks a branch it must be paid for.

Pesticides* are sprayed over the cotton fields while people are working.

Where there is a hut this is for lots of people and has no lights or windows.

Children pick one-third of the coffee harvest.

The employers often fix the weights so that the amount picked appears less.

There are no schools provided, and all the children work.

The climate is very unhealthy. It is very humid (hot and wet). There are mosquitos everywhere.

Children of all ages help. The youngest pick from the lowest branches.

Mayan workers are paid less than *ladino** workers.

Sometimes the people have to live under plastic sheeting thrown over sticks.

Many families have to live together in big huts.

The workers do not earn enough to be able to drink the coffee they pick. One pound of coffee costs more than a day's wage.

Many are not even given the minimum legal wage of 4.25 *quetzals** or 50p per day.

The food provided is often rotten.

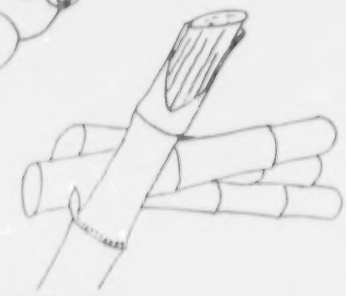
It is easy to get into debt. The *finca* shop is expensive and there is nowhere else to go.

Some *fincas* grow coffee, some cotton and some grow sugar. Conditions are very similar on all of the plantations.

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY

*
finca = plantation
seasonal workers = workers who don't work all year round
migrate = move from one place to another
pesticides = chemicals used to kill insects
ladino = mixed Spanish and Mayan person
quetzal = Guatemalan money

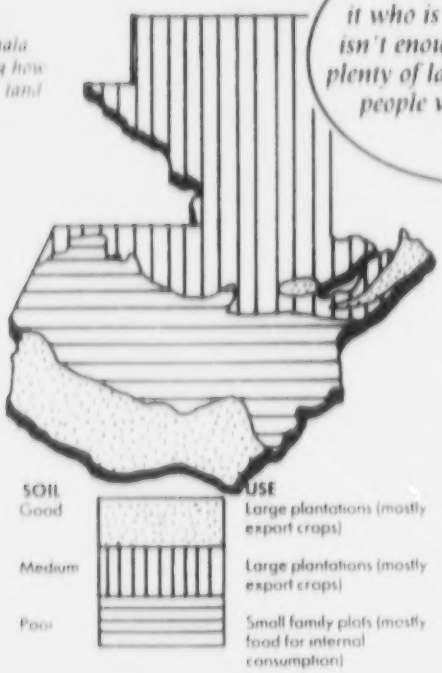
CRY FOR LAND



Guatemala has some of the most fertile* land in the whole of Latin America. However this rich land is not used to feed the people who live in the country. It is occupied by the large farms or plantations known as *fincas*. These grow crops like coffee, sugar and cotton which do not help the local people because they are sold abroad (exported). Rich landowners also grow broccoli, asparagus and flowers for countries like Britain, so that we can have these all year round. Land is being used for rearing cattle as well. The meat too is exported.

'Who is it who is saying that there isn't enough land? There is plenty of land, but only a few people who own it all.'
A MAYA

Map of Guatemala showing how the best land is used



The poorer land in Guatemala is occupied by small farms. These small farms grow food crops like maize, beans, wheat and potatoes.

There is not enough land to feed everyone and there is increasing hunger. Nine out of 10 farms are not big enough to feed a family. This means people have to work for others to earn money to buy food, medicines and cotton for clothes. Some people migrate to the city, but most do seasonal work on the *fincas* which need them as cheap labour. Often people cannot earn enough and have to borrow money. They then get into debt.

The letter below is from a North American nun writing about her Mayan neighbour. It shows how difficult conditions can be for the Maya, trying to farm on the poor mountainous land in Guatemala.

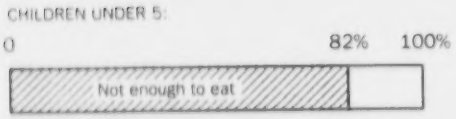
Dear Mam and Dad,
We received the startling news that Victor had fallen out of his field! Now you may wonder how someone could fall from a field. Well, for the men who farm the steep slopes of these mountainsides it isn't hard to do. Some tie themselves to trees as they work their way down the slopes with their hoes. Fortunately, he didn't break any bones, although he suffered a bruised wrist and some battered ribs.

* **fertile** = rich, good for growing crops on.

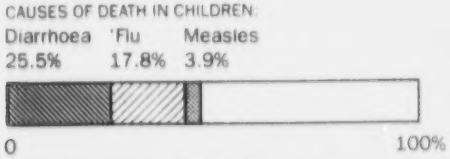
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

◆IN SICKNESS AND◆ ◆IN HEALTH

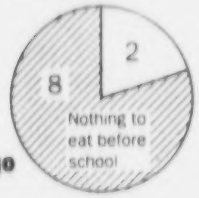
These are some of the facts about health and diet in Guatemala:



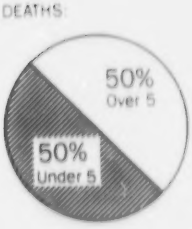
82% of children under the age of five do not have enough to eat.



The three main causes of death in children 1983-85 could have been prevented: diarrhoea caused 25.5% deaths; 'flu caused 17.8%; measles caused 3.9%.



Eight out of 10 children at primary school have had nothing to eat before they go to school.



50% of deaths are under the age of five.

The Maya do not get proper health care. The Maya live mainly in the countryside and most doctors are in the cities. The Maya often cannot afford to pay for a visit to the doctor or for medicines. However they use many herbs and plants to help cure illnesses. This knowledge has been handed down over the years.

Most Maya cannnot grow enough to feed themselves all year so they have to buy food. They often do not have enough money so are unable to feed their families properly. This means many of the Maya suffer from malnutrition*.

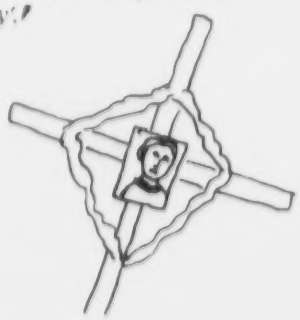
Maya religious worker... *'They simply cannot afford to buy enough to feed themselves. If you have 10 in your family, you need five pounds of maize a day which at 25 centavos* a pound now costs costs around 1.50 quetzals - that is before the beans and everything else you need.'*

(1.50 *quetzals* was the average daily wage at this time in 1986.)

Religious worker describing work on the plantations... *'Mothers carry their babies on their backs as they work in the fields. Crop-dusting planes* still spray DDT on the fields and the people working in them. If the babies are not killed by the DDT, they drink DDT as they feed, since DDT builds up in mother's milk.'*

(DDT is a pesticide*, which has been banned in Britain and the USA for many years.)

Worker and mother... *'When I asked how many children she had, Vicenta told me, 'Ten – two living and eight in the cemetery'.'*



* **malnutrition** = ill health caused by not eating enough
centavos — 100 *centavos* = 1 *quetzal*
crop-dusting planes = planes which spray pesticides
pesticide = chemical which kills insects.

PABLO'S DREAM

In Guatemala many children do not have the chance of going to school and getting an education. These testimonies tell you something about education for the Maya:

Testimony 1: Rosita, a Maya aged 19...
'I don't want to get married yet. Maybe later, but I want to finish school first. I left the village to go to school because the school here doesn't go past third year of primary. If you want to study and learn, then you have to make an effort to go wherever you have to.'

Testimony 2: Pablo, a Maya aged 30...
'Maybe my baby daughter will grow up and become a lawyer. Maybe she will run for Congress, and maybe she will get elected to represent her people. Wouldn't that be great? What if we had five or ten Maya educated from every town who could be the doctors, lawyers and politicians for their own people!'*

Testimony 3: Cecilia, a *ladina aged 24...**
'When I left school, my life was made up of parties, movies, seeing friends and studying. One of my teachers asked me if I wanted to work in a remote mountain village as a teacher for two months. I didn't speak Mam (the Mayan language). I had been expecting to teach in Spanish and they didn't speak very much Spanish. All the children were of different ages, from six to 16. The school was only a room with a door, and no windows. It was awful. The only light for everyone came through the one door. I was used to a school with facilities.'

Testimony 4: Domingo, a Maya...
'I still remember the beating the teacher gave me when I wrote 'Rio bravo' instead of 'Rio Bravo'. 'You are stupid,' he told me and threw me out of the class.'

* **congress** = governing body
ladina = woman or girl of mixed Spanish and Mayan descent

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

20

TEACHING ◆ MY PEOPLE

In March 1991 Herminio Pérez, a Maya-Mam*, visited Britain. He is an adult literacy teacher and broadcaster in Guatemala. While in London he was interviewed for a Latin American newspaper called *Chasqui*.

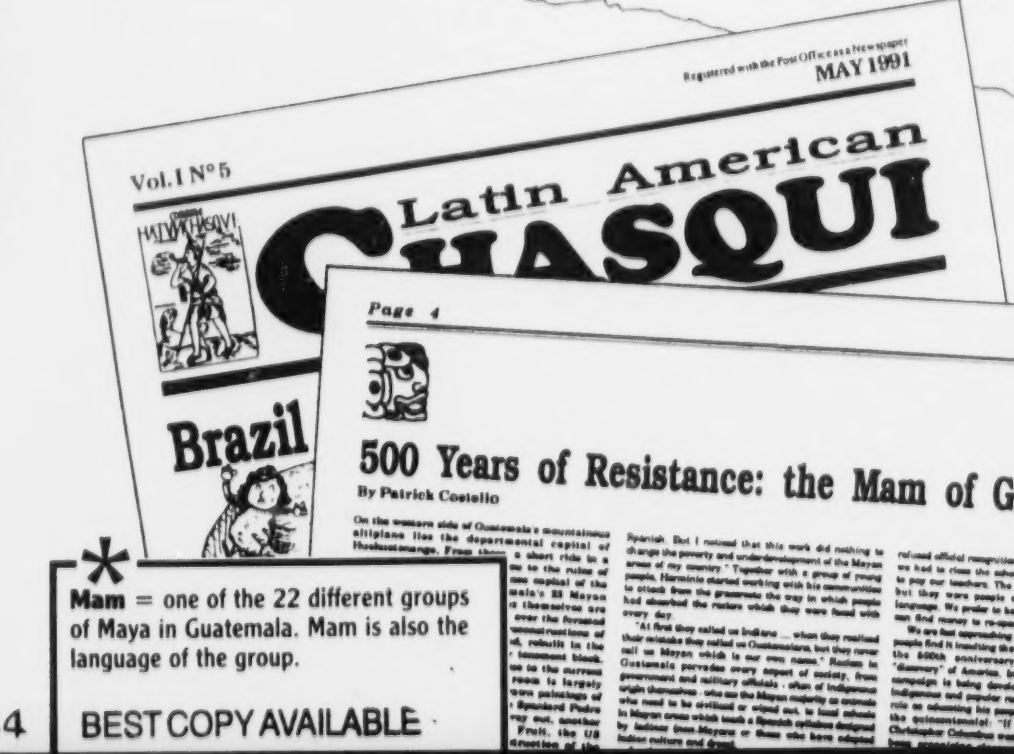
Herminio talked about what is happening in Guatemala in the article in *Chasqui*.

'We got the money from abroad (mostly from Oxfam) to set up a radio station in one of the Mayan villages. The programmes were in the Mam language on subjects of importance to us: farming, medicinal plants, cooking and music. The radio station has been a great success and now people send in letters to be read out in Mam.

When I was growing up in the 1960s I was ashamed to use my own language and wear my *traje* (traditional clothes) in public. I wanted to help modernise the country and I was teaching my people to read and write in Spanish.

But I noticed this work did nothing to change the poverty and underdevelopment of the Mayan areas of my country.

The families in our village set up our own school for our children. The children started to learn the Mam grammar and Mayan traditions and history. Local people taught in the school. In the end we had to close the school because we couldn't afford to pay our teachers. The government offered us teachers, but they were people who didn't even speak our language. We prefer to keep the school closed until we can find money to re-open it.'


Registered with the Post Office as a Newspaper

MAY 1991

Vol. I N°5

Latin American

CHASQUI

Brazil

Page 4

Feature

500 Years of Resistance: the Mam of Guatemala

By Patrick Costello

*Mam = one of the 22 different groups of Maya in Guatemala. Mam is also the language of the group.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

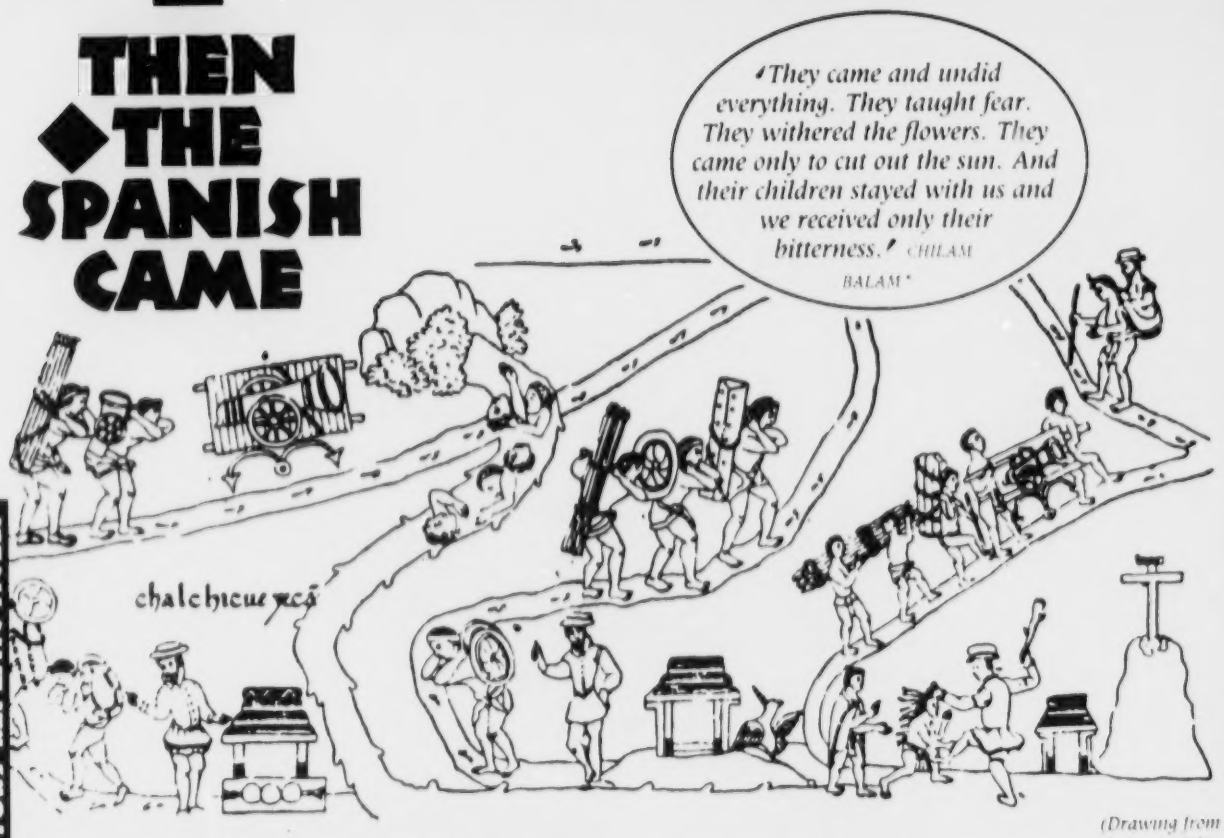
C

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Then the Spanish came 22
Finding a voice 23
Guatemala... killing fields 24
Bitter and cruel... 25
Nation of prisoners 26
Patrolling the countryside 27
In hope of returning:
Refugees 28
Refugee camps in Mexico 29
Exile 30

22

THEN ◆ THE SPANISH CAME


'They came and undid everything. They taught fear. They withered the flowers. They came only to cut out the sun. And their children stayed with us and we received only their bitterness.' CHILAM BALAM*
chalchiuexcō

(Drawing from the time of the conquest)

The Spanish arrived in Latin America in the 16th century. They set out to destroy the Maya and their way of life. They wanted the gold and silver and other riches of Guatemala as they did of other Latin American countries.

The numbers of the Maya went down rapidly. Some people say that nine out of every 10 Maya died at this time. Many of the Maya were killed in fighting with the Spanish. Others were made to work so hard for the Spanish on tasks like building churches that they died from the hard labour. They died mostly from the illnesses that the Spanish brought that they had never experienced before, like smallpox, typhoid and measles.

This is another extract from the *Chilam Balam*, the Mayan history book, which shows the changes which the Spanish brought:

'There was no sickness;
They had then no aching bones;
They had then no high fever;
They had then no smallpox;
They had then no burning chest...
They had then no consumption ...*
at that time the course of humanity was orderly.
The foreigners made it otherwise when they arrived here.'

The Spanish also brought their Catholic religion with them. They tried to make the Maya become Catholics and to destroy Mayan religion. The Church ignored the terrible hardships and poverty suffered by the people. They were responsible for destroying the records of Indian history.

This was what a Spanish priest, Friar Diego de Landa, wrote at the time:
'These people also used certain characters or letters, with which they wrote in their books about the great antiquities and their sciences... We found a great number of books and since they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain.'

* ***Chilam Balam*** = books of Mayan history
consumption = tuberculosis or TB

FINDING A VOICE

1 Guatemala belonged to Spain. It became independent from Spain in 1821 but life for the Maya did not get better. As more and more people in the world wanted coffee, the need for Mayan workers on the coffee plantations grew. More of the good lowlands in Guatemala were taken for plantations and the Maya were pushed higher and higher into the mountains. Laws were introduced making the Maya work on the roads and railways for 40 days a year, if they did not work on the plantations.

2 One government of Guatemala, for a short time in the 1950s, talked of land reform (sharing out the land more fairly) and of rights for the Maya. However landowners and the wealthy knew things would be harder for them if there was land reform and so overthrew that government. The USA and foreign companies helped them to do this.

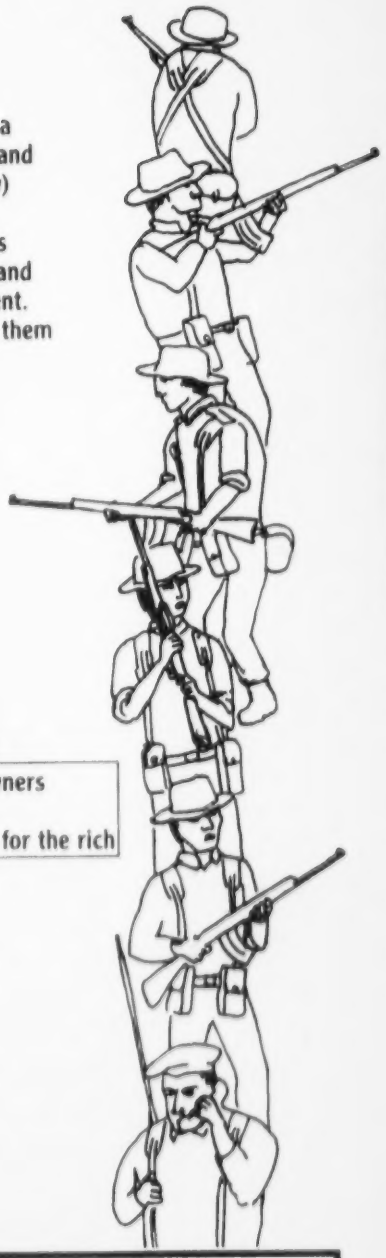
3 However people now started to think about the possibility of land reform. In the 1960s the Maya began to form co-operatives*, and to organise classes to teach reading and writing. They demanded better living conditions and social justice. The Maya were rediscovering their voice. Some members of the Catholic church supported them.

4 So that by today two sides have developed in Guatemalan politics:

Popular organisations Unions Church for the poor	versus	Landowners Army Church for the rich

5 Several guerrilla groups* were formed by people who did not feel that enough changes were being made to improve the lives of the poor. These were made up of both Maya and *ladino**.

6 As the army heard of these guerrilla groups they moved into the towns and villages. In the 1980s the death squads - formed by the people in power - were responsible for the increase in murders and people disappearing. Sometimes the mutilated bodies of the 'disappeared' are discovered. But often their bodies are never found. At first the main targets were the co-operative leaders, trade unionists and the Mayan community leaders. Then it became whole villages of Maya...



* **co-operatives** = people working together and sharing the profits.
guerrilla groups = fighters against the government
ladino = mixed Spanish and Mayan person

GUATEMALA.. KILLING ◆FIELDS

Extract from *Report of an Injustice*

Man loses his humanity,
the enormous pain of another
is no longer his concern
and he eats,
and he laughs,
and he forgets everything.

I don't want these things
for my country.
I don't want these things
for anyone.
I don't want these things
for anyone in the world.

THIS WAS WRITTEN BY OTTO RE'E CASTILLO, A GUATEMALAN POET WHO WAS BURNED ALIVE BY THE ARMY AFTER HE WAS CAPTURED WITH THE GUERRILLAS IN 1967.

(From 'Guatemalan Children Today'

In the early 1980s the army destroyed 440 Mayan villages. The aim of the army was to kill the Maya or drive them from their villages, then to make them live in areas that they could control easily. They wanted to make the Maya more a part of Guatemala and to destroy their traditional family and community ties and their links with the land. The army burned houses and destroyed crops.

This table shows the percentage of GDP* spent on arms (weapons) and on education in Guatemala. (Note that Guatemala was not at war.)

% of GDP	1977	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85
ARMS	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.4	2.6	2.9	3.6
EDUCATION				1.8	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.2

* **GDP** = Gross Domestic Product, the amount a country produces

Guatemala... killing fields

My poor, poor country
people trying to escape
not knowing what direction
all points look the same
the boom of the bombs
drives them

c
r
a
z
y

Planes flying over sad
towns throwing bombs
on innocent people.

Poor, sad, sad people
destroyed by the arms
of rich countries
and though
gentle,
have served the killers
Oh sorrow, sorrow, sorrow

THIS WAS WRITTEN BY JOSE PEREZ-AGUIRRE, A 15-YEAR-OLD REFUGEE FROM GUATEMALA NOW LIVING IN FLORIDA, USA.

25

BITTER AND CRUEL..

'What hurts us most is that our costumes are considered beautiful, but it is as if the person wearing it didn't exist.' RIGOBERTA MENCHU, MAYAN WOMAN

'At first they called us Indians... when they realised their mistake they called us Guatemalans, but they never call us Maya which is our own name.' HERMINIO PEREZ, MAYAN LITERACY TEACHER

'Even in history books the Maya are often ignored. If a book on a Latin American country includes history it is usually only since the arrival of the Spanish. People still say that Columbus 'discovered' America.' PAULA BARTLEY, HISTORY TEACHER

'The first Maya to get married in the church at Cabrican, in the 1950s, was put in jail by the sheriff for daring to enter it.' PATRICK COSTELLO, AUTHOR

'They treat us as if we are not important.' A MAYA

'People tell me Columbus discovered America. And I tell them, look at this! When Columbus 'discovered' America where were we?' GUATEMALAN GUIDE AT ONE OF THE ANCIENT MAYAN CITIES.

'The effects of the arrival of the Spanish continue today. The Maya are treated as second-class citizens. They make up 60% of the population of Guatemala yet they are treated as a minority, without rights, in their own country.' NOEL TREACY, LIBRARIAN

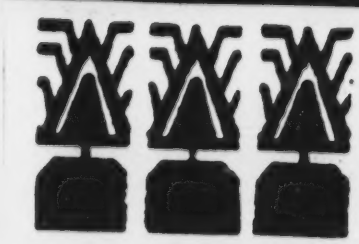
'The people are like strangers in their own land.' A GUATEMALAN BISHOP

'In a lot of towns, the Mayan kids couldn't play football... it was a ladino game, so the Mayan kids would get beaten up if they tried to play football.' RON HENNESSY, PRIEST

'The old people who know the traditions and culture are being killed. And the children are taught in Spanish and not their own language, so they are losing their identity as Maya.' ANDREA WOOD, GEOGRAPHY STUDENT

'The Mayan people face the greatest threat to their existence since the conquest. The key issue in the 1990s must be whether there will be any significant numbers of indigenous people left in Guatemala far into the 21st century.' PHILLIP WEARNE, AUTHOR OF MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP REPORT

'They act as if we're things, not people.' A MAYA



© HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NATION ◆OF PRISONERS

In the early 1980s, the army destroyed many Mayan villages because they were trying to kill the guerrillas*. They wanted to control the areas where there were most guerrillas. They called these areas 'development poles' and built 'model villages' for the Maya in those areas.

These are some statements which help to describe a 'model village'.

People do not live near others from their own community.

Electricity is very expensive.

The army provides food.

The land around is used to grow vegetables such as asparagus and broccoli for export.

There is a school and health centre.

There is no equipment in the school and health centre.

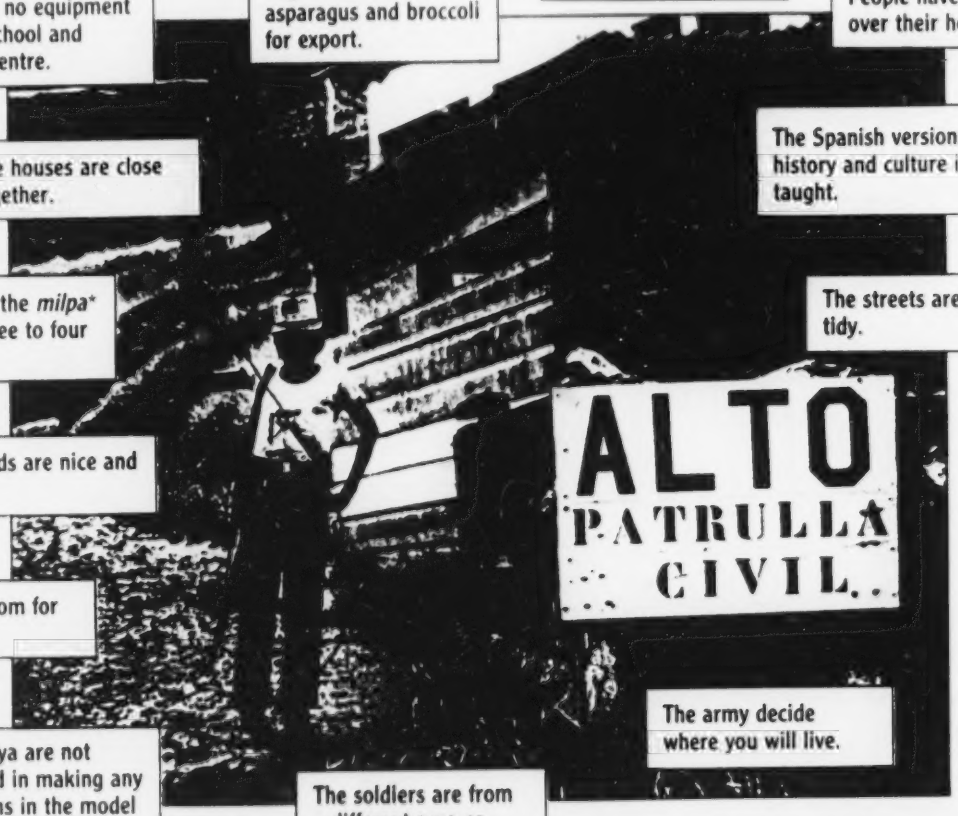
People have a roof over their heads.

The houses are close together.

The Spanish version of history and culture is taught.

The walk to the *milpa** can take three to four hours.

The streets are kept tidy.



The roads are nice and wide.

There is no room for any animals.

The army decide where you will live.

Entrance to model village (photo by Steve Smith/ANDES

The Maya are not involved in making any decisions in the model villages. The model villages are run by the army. The army does not want things to change.

The soldiers are from a different area so Spanish is the only language in common.

A pass, with a photograph, is needed for travelling.

'What do we need electricity for? So that we can watch our children starve to death at night?'

A MAYA

Very few Maya have cars.

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

* **guerrillas** = fighters against the government
milpa = maize field

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PATROLLING THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Guatemalan army started civil patrols in 1981. Civil patrols are groups of local people who are made to control their own area. The army wants the civil patrols to turn people against each other. They also want the civil patrols to act as the police force for the countryside.

This man explains how the civil patrols work: *'In our group there are six. Three of us are given guns. We walk around the countryside in pairs. If we see anybody walking around, even people we know, we have to bring them to the army base for interrogation*. After 6.00pm we have to shoot anyone we see.'*

'This is what hell must be like.'
CIVIL PATROL MEMBER, 1985

TABLE OF DUTIES
This is a sample of some of the civil patrol duties. (These are men's duties but women also have to be part of civil patrols in some areas.)

Town	How often	Hours on duty	Age range
Mocolixot	Every 8 days	9	13-75 yrs
Nebaj	Every 15 days	24	18-55 yrs
Pacux	Every 3 days	12	15-60 yrs
Uspantan	Every 13 days	12	12-55 yrs

The civil patrollers may also have to pay for their own uniforms and equipment in some areas. They are punished if they miss their turn in the civil patrol. In some areas the army gives the patrollers real guns, but often they carry sticks or imitation guns. Patrollers with the imitation guns are in danger of these being mistaken for real guns in the dark. If the civil patrol is out with the army then they are often made to walk in front, so that they are the first to be shot if there are any guerrilla attacks.

People who have to spend time on patrol duties are forced to neglect the crops they grow. It is even more difficult to travel to work on the *fincas* at harvest time, because people have to ask permission to go and they have to pay for the patrol duties they miss. Civil patrollers are also used as a free source of labour and have to build and mend roads.

'Every morning at 6am, we line up for instructions and the soldier says, 'You are men; you have to show you are brave.' You have to kill anybody; it doesn't matter if it's your brother, your brother-in-law or your father. You have to kill women – the army makes you kill, they don't do it.' CIVIL PATROLLER

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

'They're voluntary - but you're dead if you don't join.'
A PRIEST, 1984

* **interrogation** = questioning

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IN HOPE ◆ OF RETURNING

REFUGEES

In the early 1980s army attacks on Mayan villages increased. The people were killed or forced to flee. It is estimated that over one million Mayas had to leave their homes as a result of these attacks. Some became refugees within Guatemala - in the cities or the mountains. Others left the country.

REFUGEES IN THE CITIES

The Maya who have gone to Guatemala City live in the shanty towns where there is no clean water or toilets. There are no basic services, like hospitals and schools. The refugees cannot find proper jobs because they do not have the right papers. It is difficult to find a place to stay. They worry about being recognised as Maya so some have stopped wearing their traditional clothes.

STREET CHILDREN

It is not only adults who try to live in the city. There are about 5000 children living 24 hours a day on the streets of Guatemala City. They are aged between five and 18. They are mainly Maya. The children survive by searching through rubbish for food, begging and stealing. They sleep on pavements and under parked cars. Many have lost their parents and other members of their families. They have no one.

The children are also being threatened and attacked by the police. In the first six months of 1990 more than 40 street children were killed.

> Police shot and killed a 12-year-old boy who stole a motorist's sunglasses. They kidnapped a man who had witnessed it and threatened him before releasing him.

REFUGEES IN THE MOUNTAINS

Some Maya have fled into the mountains with their families and whatever they can carry. They have to eat berries to survive. They may build little huts to live in.

Sometimes they plant crops in the mountains, but if the army discover the crops they spray pesticides to destroy them. They bomb and machine-gun the people. These brave and determined people just want to be able to live in peace. They do not want to fight, as the army claims.

> *'We've learned to care for each other, to defend each other, and to live together. This life we live in the mountains has taught us to live truly as persons, as human beings.'* A MAYAN REFUGEE

IN HOPE OF RETURNING

REFUGEE CAMPS IN MEXICO

Most Guatemalan refugees live in camps in Mexico. Sometimes the Maya who speak the same language are able to live together, but not always.

TRADITIONS

There are many old and sick being looked after in the camps. They help to preserve the Mayan customs and language. Apolinar, a nine-year-old Mayan boy, goes every week to an elder* to hear of the struggle of his people. He learns that *'a person is a person only through others. We all help each other along in this life. That is how your father died, trying to help our people become free.'*

EDUCATION

Education is important. The children must learn about the Maya, and the history and traditions such as weaving. They must learn everything which will help them to survive in the future: *'We don't want our children to be taken advantage of, like we were. It is important for them to learn Spanish so they can defend themselves.'*

RESOURCES

The Maya organise classes to teach reading and writing or skills to earn money, such as weaving. However these all depend on having resources such as cotton for weaving and books for learning. Francisco, a 15-year-old teacher's assistant, says, *'We work and work and never get ahead. There is not enough land to grow our food and this is why our children are so hungry. And how can I teach the little ones to read when there are no books?'*

LIVING CONDITIONS

Life is not easy in the camps. The refugees are not always safe. There have been bombings and massacres by the Guatemalan army across the Mexican border. There is not much food. Sometimes people are allowed to grow food, but may have to give half the food they grow for rent. Most have to depend on donations of food from the Mexican government and from abroad. The Maya often feel that they must hide the fact that they are Maya to avoid discrimination. Women may stop carrying their babies on their backs or bundles on their heads in the traditional way. They may dress differently and store or even sell their traditional clothes.

* **elder** = an old, wise person

30

IN HOPE ◆OF RETURNING EXILE..

The following is adapted from a letter written to the President of Guatemala in 1986 by refugees living in Mexico:

Mr President,

We cannot forget the agony as we fled through the mountains, dying of hunger. None of that appeared in the international news. Where were you Mr President when they were killing us?

We love our country, but now we cannot return; our lands have been given to other peasants.

We are not returning because:

There is no respect for human rights in Guatemala.

The majority of the population still lives in hunger and misery. They have no land or real wages.

People are not able to speak out freely. The civil patrols continue and people are forced to join.

The people still have to live in model villages.

If you respond with all of this then we will believe you.

'We want to return to the lands of our birth, we want to return and sow our maize, rebuild our communities.'

MAYAN REFUGEE

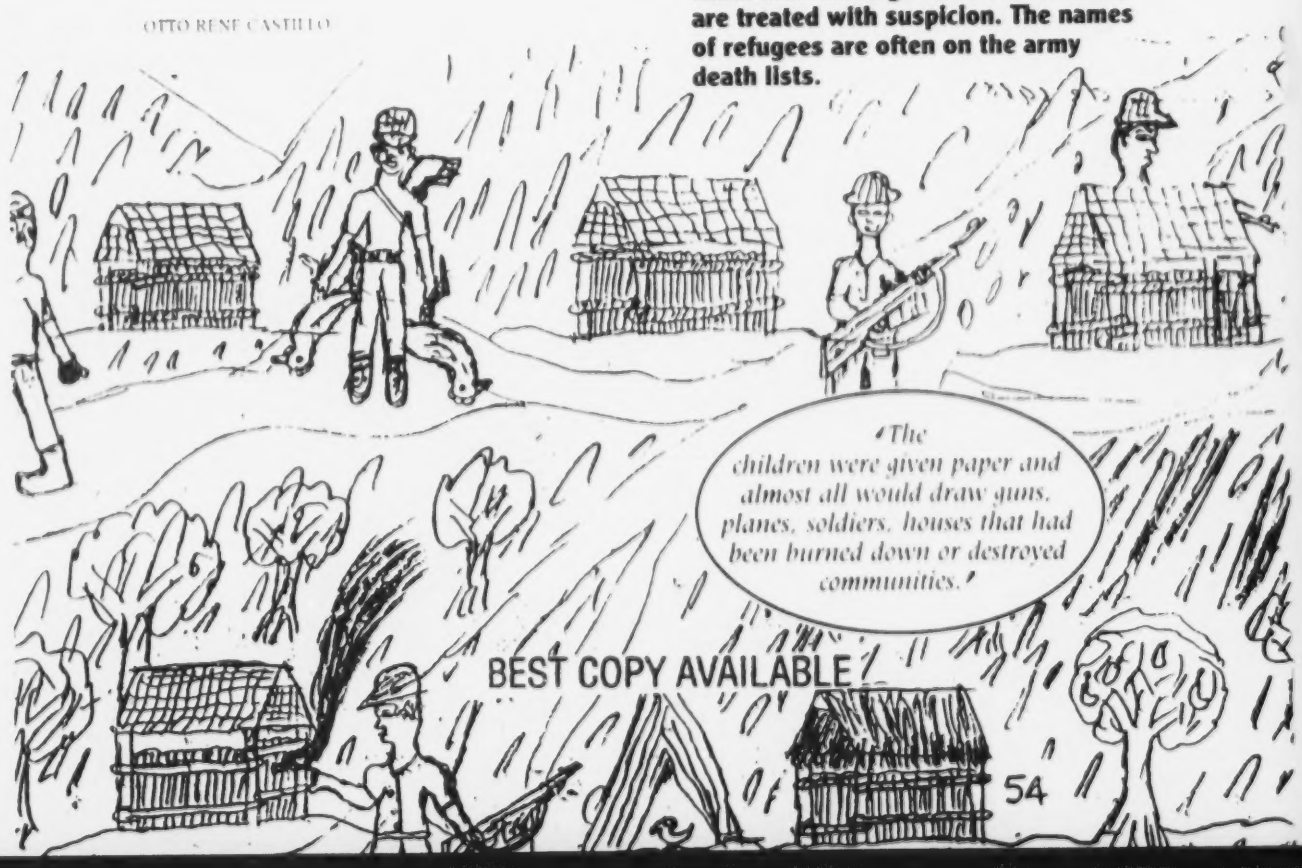
If the refugees return to Guatemala they have to spend time in re-education camps. Many find that their lands have been given to others. They are treated with suspicion. The names of refugees are often on the army death lists.

Exile

One last painful question for all:
Do you even know what exile is?
Oh, you will know!
I'll tell you:
exile
is a long, long avenue
where only sadness walks.
In exile, every day is called
simply: agony.

OTTO RENE CASTILLO

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF


'The children were given paper and almost all would draw guns, planes, soldiers, houses that had been burned down or destroyed communities.'

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

D

THE MISSING

The Missing 32
Disappearances 33
Speaking out: 34
CERJ 34
CONAVIGUA 35
GAM 36
Tell as many people as you can 37

32

(Photo by Steve Smith/ANDES)

◆THE MISSING

D THE MISSING

Although this song is not about Guatemala, it applies equally well to the situation in Guatemala:

Can anyone tell me if they've seen my husband -
the woman asked.
His name is Ernesto X; he is 40 years old,
he works as a watchman
for a second-hand car showroom.
He was wearing a dark shirt and light trousers.
He left the night before yesterday and hasn't returned;
I don't know what to think.
This has never happened to me before.

I have been looking for my sister for three days.
Her name is Altagracia, after our grandmother.
She left work to go to school.
She had blue jeans on and a white blouse.
It wasn't the boyfriend, he's at home.
They know nothing of her at the Secret Police
Headquarters nor at the hospital.

Someone tell me if they've seen my son.
He's a medical student.
His name is Augustin. He's a good boy.
Sometimes stubborn in his opinions.
He has been held. I don't know who by.
White trousers, striped shirt. It happened two days ago.

My mother's name is Clara Quinones.
She is a woman of God and doesn't bother anyone.
Yet she has been taken away as a witness
on a matter that only concerns me:
So I gave myself up this afternoon and now nobody
knows where she is.

Last night I heard several explosions.
Shots from rifles and revolvers.
Speeding cars, brakes screeching. Screams.
The echo of boots in the street.
The noise of banging at doors. Complaints.
Swearing. Broken dishes.
They were showing a soap opera on TV.
No one looked outside.

Where do people who disappear go to?
Look in the water and in the bushes.
Why do they disappear?
Because we are not all equal.
When do they return?
Every time our thoughts bring them back.
How can we talk to the disappeared one?
With our emotions, from inside.

WRITTEN BY RUBEN BLADES, A PANAMANIAN SINGER. FROM THE ALBUM *BUSCANDO AMERICA*. TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

V VIDA DISAPPEARANCES.. DE NUEST

...000 people in Guatemala have disappeared in the last 30 years. 100,000 people have been killed.

D THE MISSING

'You lift up your head and they break it. You open your mouth and they shut it. You take a step forward and you're dead.' RAFAEL YOS MUXTAY, A MAYA KIDNAPPED IN 1985

(From Amnesty International 'Guatemala: the Human Rights Record' p.18)

Name & Place of "disappearance"	Age	Date	Profession	Unit named as responsible	Inquiries initiated with*	Response from Government	Other details
GARCIA ESCOBAR, Leavia Lucrecia (Zone 1, Guatemala City)	23	15.04.84	Textile technician (member of textile trade union)	Armed men	Police, hospitals, prisons		Pushed into Land Rover while on her way home from work at "Los Pollos"
GOMEZ CALITO, René Arnaldo (between Amatitlán, Guatemala, and south coast)	34	16.07.83	Tailor	Not known	Via the GAM		Left Amatitlán to visit the south coast and never returned. Brother of Héctor Gómez Calito, GAM leader, abducted and killed in March 1985
GOMEZ CARRETO, Efrain Pedro (Caserío San Miguel Pajapa, Pajapita, San Marcos)	19	27.01.84	Day labourer	8-10 armed civilians	All military detachments in the area and national authorities		Taken from his home together with his father, Segundo Gómez López (see below)
GOMEZ LOPEZ, Segundo (Caserío San Miguel Pajapa, Pajapita, San Marcos)	55	27.01.84	Day labourer	8-10 armed civilians			Taken from his home together with his son, Efrain Pedro Gómez Carreto (see above)
GOMEZ PULA, Fulogio (San Jacinto, Chimaltenango)	19	26.02.82	Farmer	Army	San Martín Jilotepeque and Chimaltenango army bases; police	Detention denied; police said they would investigate	Was on his way to watch television in San Jacinto when he was intercepted and taken to San Martín Jilotepeque army base

'They are killing us because we teach what we have learned. You taught us that God gave us human dignity, and we learned to defend our rights. You taught us to organise and we began to work together for a better life. These new ideas frighten the powerful. They don't want the poor to learn anymore so they kill us.'

SAID BY A MAYA TO A CATHOLIC NUN

The following testimony shows the threat faced every day by the Maya:

'Pedro left here for the city. He almost never leaves town because he has to work here each day in order to feed his family each night. But last week he took some carrots to sell... Pedro was taken off the bus. He was marched to the army camp. THAT WAS THE LAST HIS FRIENDS EVER SAW OF HIM.'

57

Photo by Piers Cavendish/ reflex/GCHR)

34

OR EL DERECHO DE LOS MARGINADOS Y OPRIMIDOS

CONSEJO de COMUNIDADES ETNICAS

RUNUJEL JUNAM

CERJ

D THE MISSING

(Photo by Steve Smith/ANDES)

SPEAKING OUT

There are several new human rights groups in Guatemala. Human rights groups have existed there in the past, but all of their members and organisers have been killed. Today, too, those fighting for rights for the Maya in Guatemala live in constant fear for their lives. They receive death threats to themselves and their families and some have disappeared.

CERJ

(Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities)

CERJ is one of these Human Rights groups. Runujel Junam means 'Everybody is equal' in Maya Quiché, one of the Mayan languages.

CERJ was formed in 1988 to protect Mayan culture and to speak out against human rights abuses* in the highlands of Guatemala. CERJ records the abuses which take place. People arrive every day at the office to report events. It is easier for them to go to the CERJ office than trying to travel to the capital, Guatemala City, to present their cases. They can also give the evidence in their own Mayan language.

CERJ are also concerned about land reform, improved housing, everyone being able to read and write, and an end to discrimination against the Maya.

CERJ is trying to disband the civil patrols. The patrols were formed to help the army control the countryside and they are compulsory in many areas of Guatemala.

'I decided to stop patrolling, and I now work as a CERJ organiser, encouraging my neighbours to boycott the civil patrols too. I walk to nearby villages, talking to new CERJ members. We travel with copies of the Constitution of Guatemala. Article 34 of the Constitution says no one should be made to join an organisation - so no one should be forced into the civil patrols. But the army says that if we don't join, we must be guerrillas and guerrillas get killed.' MANUEL MORALES CERJ MEMBER

* **human rights abuses** = lack of freedom, torture, killing, disappearances

SPEAKING OUT

CONAVIGUA

(National Committee of Guatemalan Widows)

CONAVIGUA was formed in 1988. All of its members are Mayan women whose husbands have been killed by government forces.

'It began with the massacres of 1980-81 when so many of our husbands were captured and killed. 45,000 women were left widows - and that is an underestimate as it only includes the women who were prepared to denounce the mass 'disappearances'.' A CONAVIGUA LEADER

The group tries to provide support for the members, as many have no income after their husbands' death. They also demand proper burial of their loved ones.

CONAVIGUA campaigns too against the forced recruitment into the Guatemalan army.

'Young men, off to the market or coming from church, are chased by recruiters or soldiers. They are grabbed, beaten, kicked, tied up and carried off to the army base. They are taught to despise their Mayan language and culture.' BERNICE KITA, A NORTH AMERICAN

CONAVIGUA has recently published a press release:

> '... After all our efforts and sacrifice to bring up our sons, they are beaten and taken to the military barracks. Soldiers even come at night to take them off. Only indigenous* people are discriminated against, captured and forcibly recruited into the army ...'

(Photo by Steve Smith/ANDES)

indigenous people = original people in an area; in Guatemala the Maya are indigenous.

SPEAKING OUT

GAM

(*Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo* in Spanish or the 'Group of Mutual Support')

Formed in 1984, GAM is based in Guatemala City and helps people whose relatives have disappeared. It has *ladino** as well as Mayan members.

It was set up by six women who were looking for the missing members of their families. They had searched in goverment offices, in police stations and even in the morgue*.

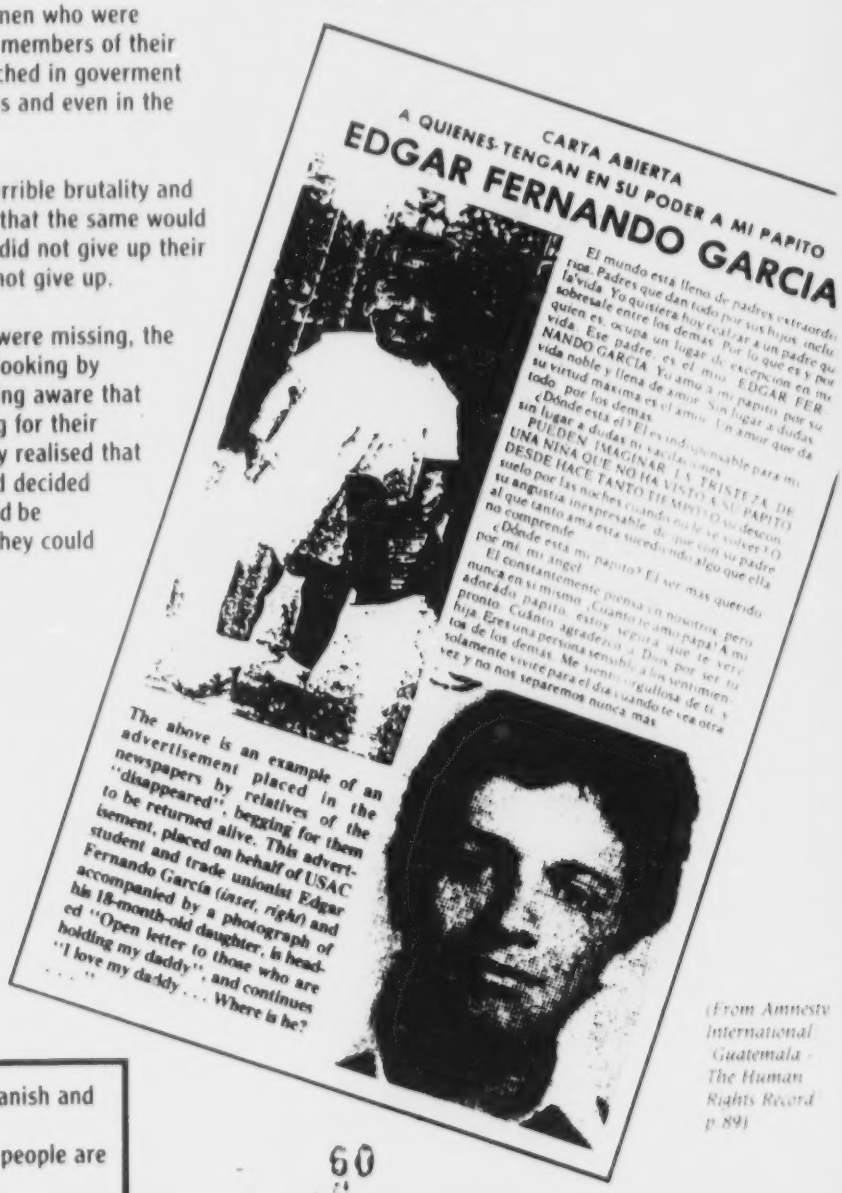
They saw evidence of terrible brutality and cruelty. They were told that the same would happen to them if they did not give up their searches. But they did not give up.

Although many people were missing, the women had each been looking by themselves, without being aware that others were also looking for their relatives. Gradually they realised that they were not alone and decided that together they would be stronger and together they could fight for justice.

The group collects information, including photographs on all of the Missing. They organise demonstrations and religious services for people to pray for the 'Disappeared'. They arrange meetings with government officials and finally met the president who told them to forget the past.

GAM pays for advertisements in the press to remind people of the disappearances and they hope these will result in more information.

This is one such advertisement:



CARTA ABIERTA

A QUIENES TENGAN EN SU PODER A MI PAPITO

EDGAR FERNANDO GARCIA

El mundo está lleno de padres extraordi-
rios. Padres que dan todo por sus hijos, inclu-
la vida. Yo quisiera hoy resaltar a un padre qu
sobresale entre los demás. Por lo que es y po
quien es, ocupa un lugar de excepción en mi
vida. Ese padre, es el mío: EDGAR FER-
NANDO GARCIA. Yo amo a mi papito por su
vida noble y llena de amor. Sin lugar a dudas,
su virtud máxima es el amor. Un amor que da
todo, por los demás.
¿Donde está él? El es indispensable para mi
sin lugar a dudas mi cuidadosa madre,
PUEDEN IMAGINAR LA TRISTEZA DE
UNA NIÑA QUE NO HA VISTO A SU PAPITO
DESDE HACE TANTO TIEMPO? A su deseo
suele por las noches cuando ella se duerme. O
su angustia inexpresable de que con su padre
al que tanto ama esta sucediendo algo que ella
no comprende.
¿Dónde está mi papito? El ser más querido
por mí, mi ángel.
El constantemente piensa en nosotros, pero
nunca en si mismo. ¿Cuanto te amo papá! A mi
adorado papito, estoy segura que te veré
pronto. Cuánto agradezco a Dios por ser tu
hija. Eres una persona sensible a los sentimien-
tos de los demás. Me siento orgullosa de ti y
solamente viviré para el día cuando te vea otra
vez y no nos separemos nunca mas.

The above is an example of an advertisement placed in the newspapers by relatives of the "disappeared", begging for them to be returned alive. This advertisement, placed on behalf of USAC student and trade unionist Edgar Fernando García (*inset, right*) and accompanied by a photograph of his 18-month-old daughter, is headed "Open letter to those who are holding my daddy", and continues "I love my daddy . . . Where is he? . . . "

(*From Amnesty International - Guatemala - The Human Rights Record p.89*)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

* ***ladino*** = person of mixed Spanish and Mayan descent
morgue = place where dead people are kept for identification

TELL AS ◆MANY PEOPLE◆ AS YOU ◆CAN

International support means people around the world showing concern for what is happening in Guatemala. It is important if the groups such as CERJ, CONAVIGUA and GAM are to survive.

Below is part of a song written by the pop singer Sting called 'They Dance Alone' about the families of the 'Disappeared' in Chile. However it could easily be about Guatemala.

The *Cueca Solo* or 'They Dance Alone' is performed publicly by the families of the 'Disappeared', often with photographs of their loved ones pinned to their clothes. It has been performed in many countries around the world. It is always very moving.

Why are these women here dancing
on their own?
Why is there this sadness in their
eyes?
Why are the soldiers here
their faces fixed like stone?
I can't see what they despise.

They're dancing with the missing,
they're dancing with the dead,
they dance with the invisible ones,
their anguish is unsaid.
They're dancing with their fathers,
they're dancing with their sons,
they're dancing with their husbands,
they dance alone, they dance alone.

It's the only form of protest they're
allowed.
I've seen their silent faces, they
scream so loud.
If they were to speak these words
they'd go missing too.
Another woman on the torture table,
what else can they do?

One day we'll dance on their graves
one day we'll sing our freedom
one day we'll laugh in our joy
and we'll dance.

FROM THE ALBUM
NOTHING LIKE THE SUN

These quotes are from two human-rights organisers in Guatemala:

'It is good for us not to feel that we are alone, but to know that there are groups of human beings around the world who understand our suffering.'

'People need to know who we are and why we are doing what we do.'

'Remember us after we have gone. Don't forget us. Conjure up our faces and our words. Our image will be as dew in the hearts of those who want to remember us.'

POPUL VUH – MAYAN SACRED BOOK

Muj loacho
muj ishtuj
chichajij le iwachoch
le iwulewal le ish ro wi
jiwilach ba le kyolbal
le uj petenak wi.

Same quote from Popul Vuh in Mam-Maya

Minority Rights Group

379 Brixton Road
London SW9 7DE
United Kingdom

62

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA

BY MARGARET BURR
EDITED BY RACHEL WARNER

AN ACTIVE LEARNING PACK
FOR KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ACTIVITY BOOK

Cover photo by Jenny Matthews

CONTENTS

A MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

We have always lived here 4
Records of the past 6
People of maize 7
Counting the days 9
Maize and Everyday lives 10
To be Maya 11
Keep our secrets 12
Becoming an adult 13
Woven pictures 14

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY

Journey to the *finca* 16
Cry for land 17
In sickness and in health 19
Pablo's dream and Teaching my people 20

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Then the Spanish came 22
Finding a voice 23
Guatemala... killing fields 24
Bitter and cruel... 25
Nation of prisoners 26
Patrolling the countryside 27
In hope of returning 28

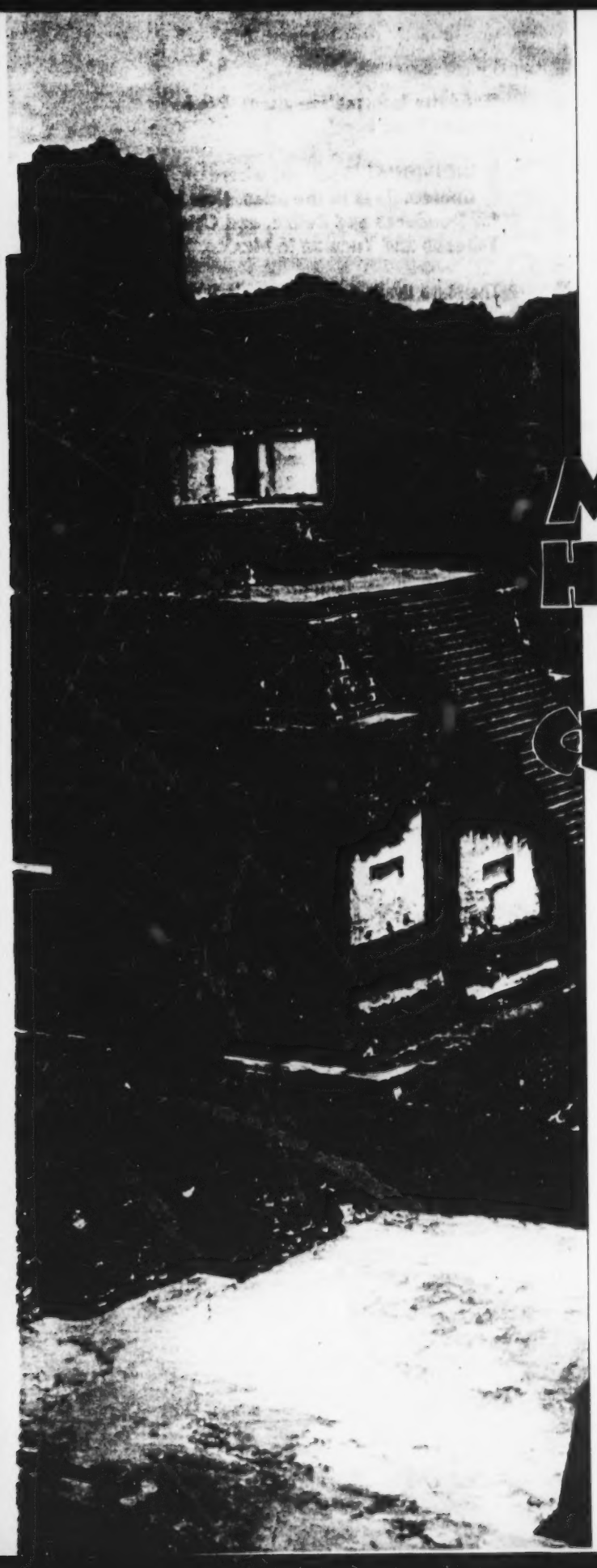
D THE MISSING

The Missing 30
Disappearances 31
Speaking out 32
Tell as many people as you can 33

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

THE MAYA OF GUATEMALA

BY MARGARET BURR
EDITED BY RACHEL WARNER



A

MAYAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

We have always lived here 4
Records of the past 6
People of maize 7
Counting the days 9
Maize and Everyday lives 10
To be Maya 11
Keep our secrets 12
Becoming an adult 13
Woven pictures 14

4

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE

Read the information sheet 'We have always lived here'.

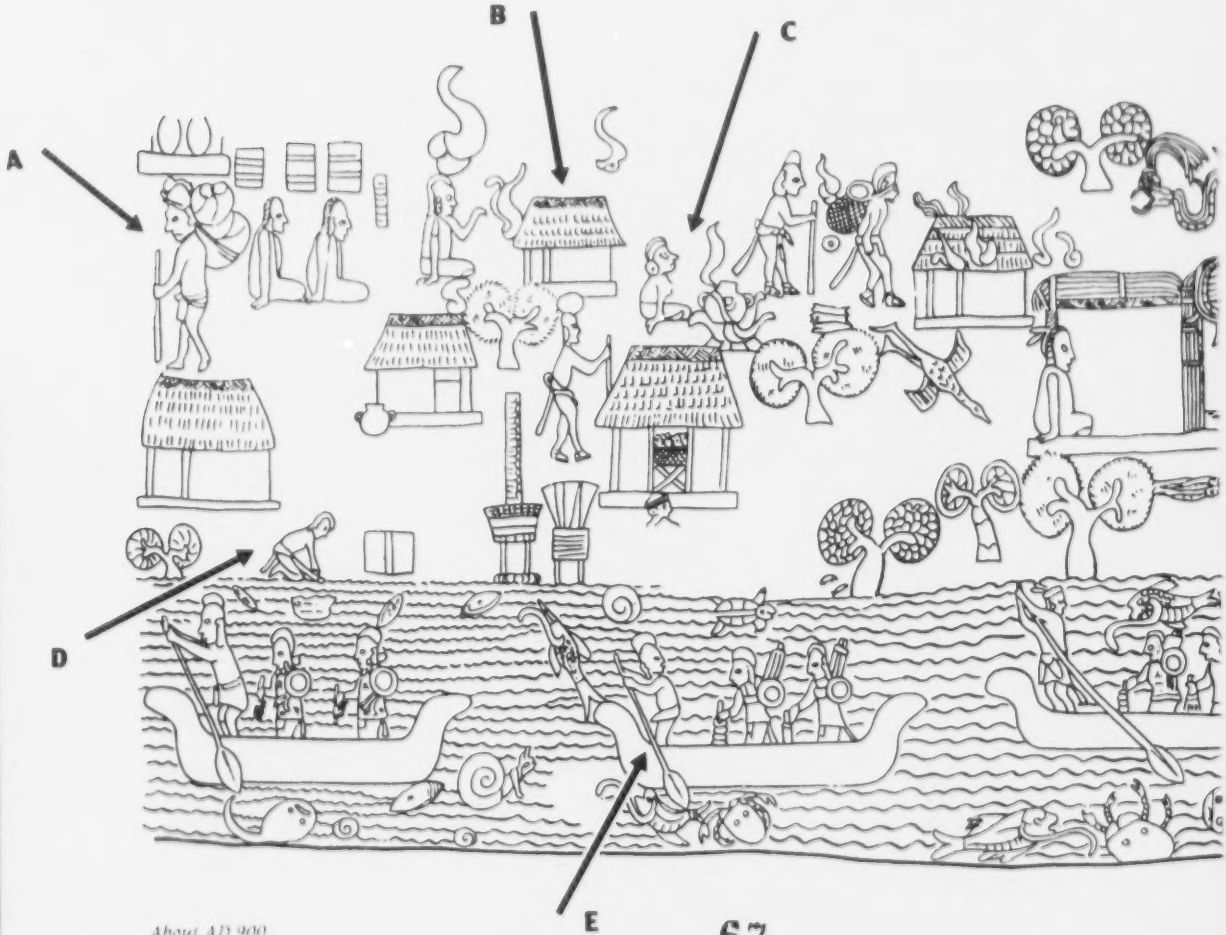
INDIVIDUAL Find out where Guatemala is in the atlas. Now look for Honduras and Belize, and Chiapas, Tabasco and Yucatán in Mexico.

The Maya lived where Guatemala is today and also in these other areas.

On an outline map mark Guatemala, Honduras, Belize and Mexico. Also mark Chiapas, Tabasco and Yucatán on the map of Mexico. Use a key to colour in where the Maya lived.

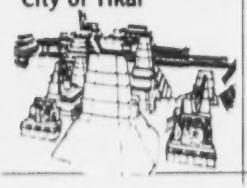
PAIR Look at the picture of the village below. It shows how the ordinary Maya lived in the past. Look closely at the points marked A B C D and E. Put the right label at the end of the arrows.

Man rowing boat
Woman washing clothes
Woman cooking food
Man carrying a load
House with typical steep roof



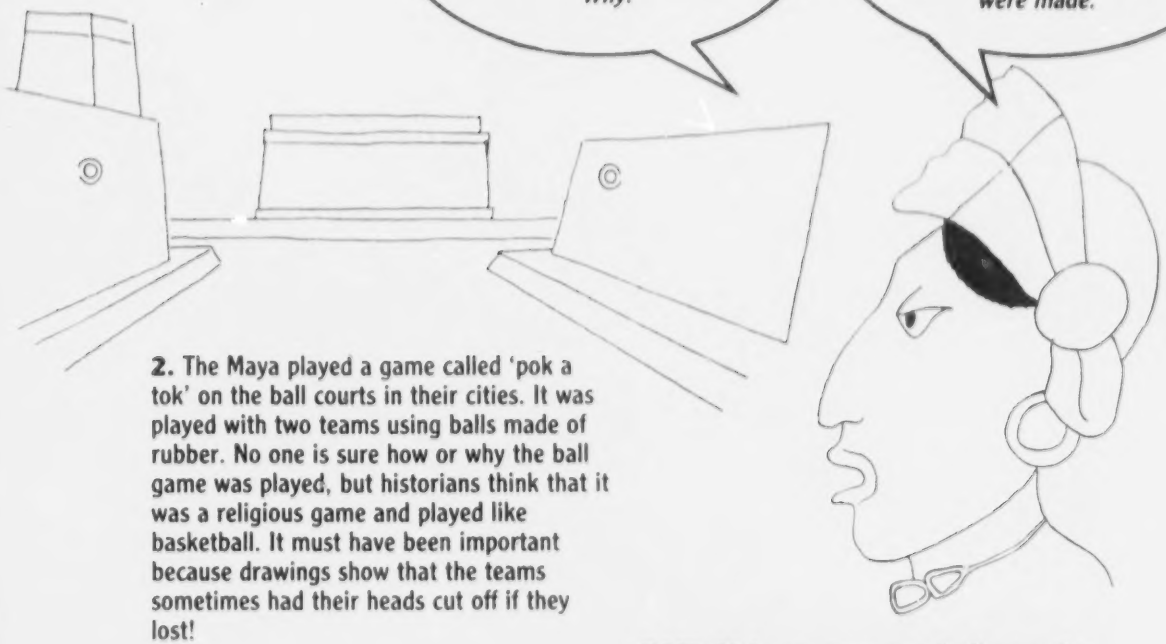
About AD 900 (drawn after Coe)

PAIR 1. Look carefully at the two pictures of the Mayan village and Tikal. Fill in the table with your partner.

	What can you learn about the Maya from the picture?	Is there anything in the picture that you don't understand?	What extra information do you need to tell you about the life of the Maya?	How useful is the picture for telling us about the daily lives of the Maya?
Mayan village				
City of Tikal 				

These pictures are SOURCES of information. Which picture do you think is the most useful source? Why?

Do you know any other buildings anywhere else in the world which are similar to those at Tikal? Try and find out about them and how they were made.



2. The Maya played a game called 'pok a tok' on the ball courts in their cities. It was played with two teams using balls made of rubber. No one is sure how or why the ball game was played, but historians think that it was a religious game and played like basketball. It must have been important because drawings show that the teams sometimes had their heads cut off if they lost!

We don't know the rules the Maya used to play 'pok a tok', but above is a drawing of one of the courts. There was a hoop made of stone on each side of the court for shooting the ball into.

PAIR Make up your own ball game for a similar court. Decide how many teams you would have, how many people in the team, and what rules you would have. See if your game works in the playground.

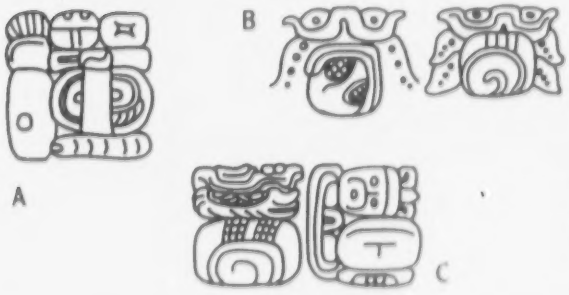
6 RECORDS OF THE PAST

Read the information sheet 'Records of the past'.

INDIVIDUAL Look at these three glyphs. They are about Mayan rulers. They mean:

death of
warfare
coming to power of

Can you write the meaning under each glyph?



(This is difficult - you can see the problems historians have had in working out the meanings of glyphs!)

Make up a glyph for yourself, showing something important about yourself. Try to make it look like a Mayan glyph.

INDIVIDUAL The carvings on the stelae and on the temple walls were often about important people. On the front of the stela was a drawing of the person and on the sides and back were information about the person's history, with details about their birth and their family. There was also information about their achievements.

Write information for a stela either for someone you like or for yourself. Include information you would want people to know about in the future. Draw a picture of the person.

Like the ancient Maya we do things to ourselves which we think make us more beautiful.

Think about all of the things that people do today to make themselves beautiful: painting their faces, piercing their ears, etc. Make a list of these things.

PAIR Look at the drawing of the Bonampak mural on the information sheet and answer these questions:

The Mayan leader is looking at some prisoners.

1 What could he do with the captives?

2 Which do you think is the most likely:
set them free?
play ball with them?
use them as a sacrifice?

3 What information would you need to be sure this is the most likely answer?

4 How useful is the painting in helping us to understand how the Maya treated their captives?

5 What do we learn from the picture?

The Bonamapak painting shows a scene of importance. How would you record a scene of importance to you today? Which scene would you choose? What do you think future generations would learn about your scene of importance?

7

PEOPLE OF MAIZE

Read the information sheet 'People of maize'.

The Goddess of weaving

The God of maize

sowing the maize

PAIR Can you think of three times when the Maya would want to pray especially to each of these Gods or Goddesses? Fill in the boxes with your ideas. One has been started for you.

The God of learning

GROUP Read the story about how the Maya believe - and believed - the first people were made. Put these sentences in the right order:

The Gods made the second people out of wood.

None of these attempts worked.

The last time the Gods made the people out of maize.

The animals and humans sang their thanks to the Gods.

The Gods made the first people out of mud.

Next the Gods tried to make people from plants and trees.

This time it worked. There were soon many people on the earth.

Why do you think weaving, maize and learning were important to the Maya? Why were they regarded as Gods or Goddesses?

Discuss with your partner:

What other cultures have creation stories?

Do you know any creation stories yourselves?

Are the stories you know similar to the Maya story?

In what way?

Why do you think they are similar?

INDIVIDUAL Read this account of the festival of New Time in the month of Yaxkin:

"They anointed with blue pitch all of the instruments of all the various occupations, from that of the priest to the spindles of the women, and even the posts of their houses. For this festival they assembled all the boys and girls, and in place of the painting and the ceremonies they gave to each nine little blows on the knuckles of their hands outside. These blows they gave that they might grow up expert craftsmen in their fathers' and mothers' occupations." FRIAR LANDA 1566

Answer these questions:

What do we learn from this account?

What more information do we need?

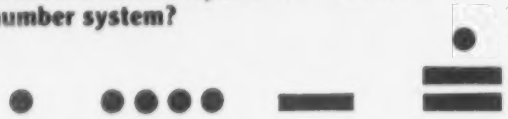
This description of the festival was written by a Christian priest, not a Maya. Do you think this makes a difference?

At the festival of New Time old things were thrown out. Find out about other New Year or New Time festivals, when the old things are thrown out and the new brought in.

COUNTING THE DAYS

PAIR Read the first paragraph on the information sheet 'Counting the days'.

What are these Mayan numbers in our number system?



Write these numbers in the Mayan system:

3 6 10 16 19 12

Add ●● to these Mayan numbers. Write your answers in Mayan.

INDIVIDUAL Read about the calendars on the information sheet.

Put these Mayan time words in order, starting with 'kin':

katun
kin
baktun
tun
uinal

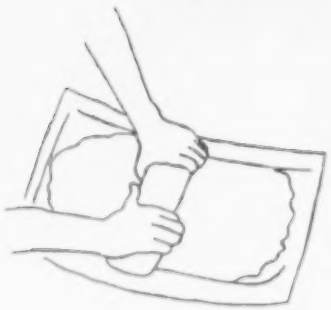
In the Mayan Long Count calendar which is the nearest to: a year? a fortnight? a decade?

PAIR Read about the Vague Year. What day do you count as unlucky? Can you find out what days are considered unlucky in other cultures?

Can you make your own Sacred Round calendar out of paper or cardboard?

10

MAIZE AND EVERYDAY LIVES



PAIR Read the section on the 'Maize' sheet about cooking. With your partner put these sentences in the right order to explain how the Maya made (and make) tortillas:

They cook the tortillas over a wood fire.

They rinse the kernels.

They rub the kernels from the cob.

They make the flour into little balls.

They grind the kernels with a stone grinder.

They flatten the balls into pancakes (tortillas).

They soak the kernels in water and lime.

PAIR Read the two prayers below:

This is a prayer of the Maya Quiché people from the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya. It is about the growing of maize. This prayer is from the 16th century.

Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth,
give us our sign, our word,
as long as there is day, as long as there is light.
When it comes to the sowing, the dawning,
will it be a greening road, a greening path?
Give us a steady light, a level place,
a good light, a good place,
a good life and beginning.

This a similar prayer which is used today.

Heart of the sky,
You are our father,
we ask you to give your warmth and light
to our animals, our maize, our beans, our plants,
so that they may grow
and our children may eat.

With your partner discuss:

What do they tell us about Mayan farming?

What things are similar in the 16th century and today?

What things are different?

PAIR Look at the photographs of the Maya today on the sheet 'Everyday lives'. Look at these three drawings of Mayan life in the past.

About AD900 (drawn after Coe)

Read the 'Everyday lives' sheet. Discuss with your partner:

What in Mayan life has changed and what has remained the same?

TO BE MAYA

SEE YOUR TEACHER FIRST

PAIR Find a partner. Spend two minutes describing yourself to your partner. The person listening must not interrupt. Then swap roles and the first person to speak must now listen. After you have both spoken discuss what you said:

Did you both talk about the same sorts of things? Were the things you found important the same or different?

Now listen to what a young Guatemalan woman said when she was asked to describe herself. Your teacher will read this to you.

Discuss with your partner:

Are you surprised by this? Why/why not?

Read the information sheet called 'To be Maya'. It tells you about how the people live and what is important to them.

INDIVIDUAL The information sheet 'To be Maya' is in four sections: Community, Maize, Milpa, and People and Nature. These sections show what is important to the Maya.

Write an information sheet about the things which are important to you. The following are some ideas for headings that you might want to use:

Family; Community; Religion; School

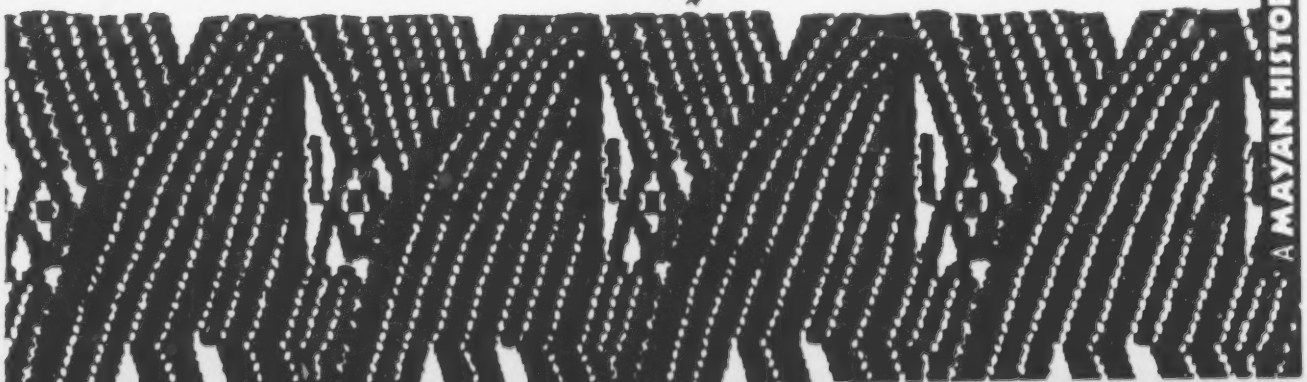
You can make your sheet in the same shape as the Maya sheet or you can make it a different shape. You can include drawings and decorate the sheet. The Maya have four colours for the four different directions. Like the Maya, choose the colours which are important to you.

PAIR Discuss these questions:

What do these statements tell you? Do you think we feel the same way about the land? Can we learn anything from these statements?

'Our way of life is completely intertwined with nature. For us the land is sacred, the corn is sacred, the rain is sacred. The land is alive and it gives us life.'
A MAYA

'How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?' NATIVE AMERICAN CHIEF SEATTLE'S REPLY WHEN THE US GOVERNMENT OFFERED TO BUY TRIBAL LANDS



12

KEEP OUR SECRETS

INDIVIDUAL The pictures below are in the right order, but the sentences are jumbled up. Match each sentence with the right picture.

Now read the information sheet 'Keep our secrets' and check your answers.

1 Neighbours visit every day and bring small gifts.

2 Mother and baby spend eight days alone together.

A

B

C

8 Two other couples are present at the birth.

D

E

4 Mother says she is pregnant.

3 Baby is baptised after 40 days.

F

G

6 Mother introduces the unborn baby to the world around.

H

5 Baby is in new bed with candles at the corner.

7 There are celebrations as the baby is introduced to all.

INDIVIDUAL According to the Maya every person is born with a *nahual**. Answer these questions:

If you had a *nahual*, which animal would you choose and why?

Each animal has characteristics associated with it, some positive and some negative. For example, the mule is seen as stubborn. What characteristics do you think the animal you have chosen has?

Which characteristics do you think you would sometimes use as an excuse for your own behaviour?

* ***nahual*** — pronounced nakwaal

GROUP In the drawings of the Mayan birth customs picture C shows the mother introducing the baby to the world.

Imagine you were introducing someone to YOUR world. Write a guide for visitors to the area where you live. Write particularly about the positive aspects. You could include a plan, maps and drawings or photographs. You could also make this into a display.

BECOMING ◆AN◆ ADULT

PAIR Read the information sheet 'Becoming an adult'.

Discuss with your partner:

1 Why do you think Rigoberta was given clothes on her 10th birthday? Do you think they made her feel different? How?

2 Why do you think Rigoberta was given a pig, two chickens and a lamb on her 12th birthday? Do you think they made her feel different? How?

3 What presents were you given for your last birthday? Why weren't you given a pig, chickens and a lamb? How did you FEEL about the presents you had for your last birthday?

PAIR Like Rigoberta we have to take on responsibilities as we grow up. We also get certain rights at different ages.

Look at the table below and see if you know how old you have to be to do certain things. Discuss with your partner and tick the right column.

	AGE: less than 16	16	17	18	21	any age
You can buy cigarettes when you are						
You can buy and drink alcohol						
You can serve on a jury						
You can drive a car						
You can vote						
You can leave school						
You can get married						
You can become an MP						
You can have your own passport						

INDIVIDUAL *'They talked about the responsibilities of adult life'*, was what Rigoberta says about her 10th birthday.

Read the section about Rigoberta's 10th birthday again. Then answer these questions:

At what age do you think you will become an adult?

Would you like to be treated as an adult at the age of 10? Why/why not?

14

WOVEN PICTURES

PAIR Look at the six designs A-F on the information sheet 'Woven pictures'. Match each of the designs with the right label:

People Corn Deer Peacock Dog Horse

INDIVIDUAL Read the information about the designs on the 'Woven pictures' sheet. As you can see from the information about the Bird design, some tell stories. Make up your own story using designs. Use one of the following sentences as a beginning:

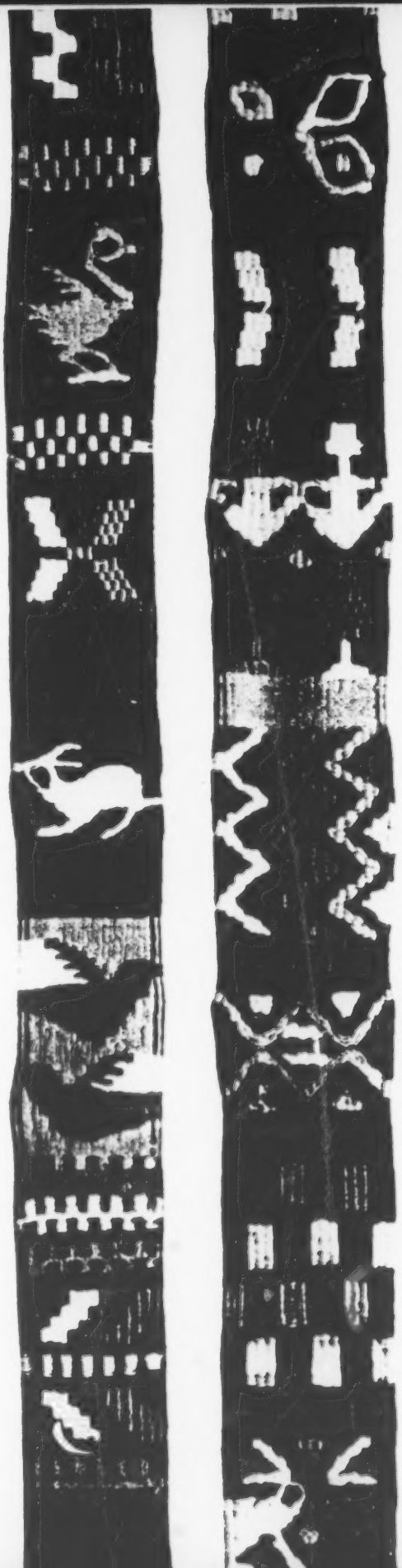
1 One day the peacock looked up at the moon...

2 The deer leapt over the stream...

3 Under the hot sun the corn was ripening...

Use any of the designs on the sheet in your story or make up your own designs. If you make up your own designs, try to make them look Mayan.

PAIR Choose designs from those on the 'Woven Pictures' sheet for a belt or sash or headband for yourself. (Remember, designs vary from village to village in Guatemala.) Draw your design. Explain why you have chosen it.



B

FAIR OR UNFAIR? ◆ LIFE TODAY

Journey to the *finca* **16**
Cry for land **17**
In sickness and in health **19**
Pablo's dream and Teaching my people **20**

16

JOURNEY TO THE FINCA

PAIR Read the 'Journey to the *finca*' information sheet. Place each of the statements about conditions on the *finca* under one of the following headings:

Living conditions	Work and wages	Health and safety	Other

COPY INTO YOUR BOOK

INDIVIDUAL Choose the three conditions on the *finca* which you think are the worst and explain why you have chosen these.

GROUP In your group, prepare a role play. This is the situation:

The plantation owner has agreed to meet all of the plantation workers because you have threatened to go on strike. You have never had the chance to say what you wanted to before. The company buyer is here and she has asked to come too. She is the representative of the company in Europe, which buys most of the coffee from the plantation.

People should chose different characters:

Plantation owner

Company buyer

Workers (one could be a trade unionist, one a housing official, for example)

Local health worker in nearest town

Local religious worker concerned about justice for all people

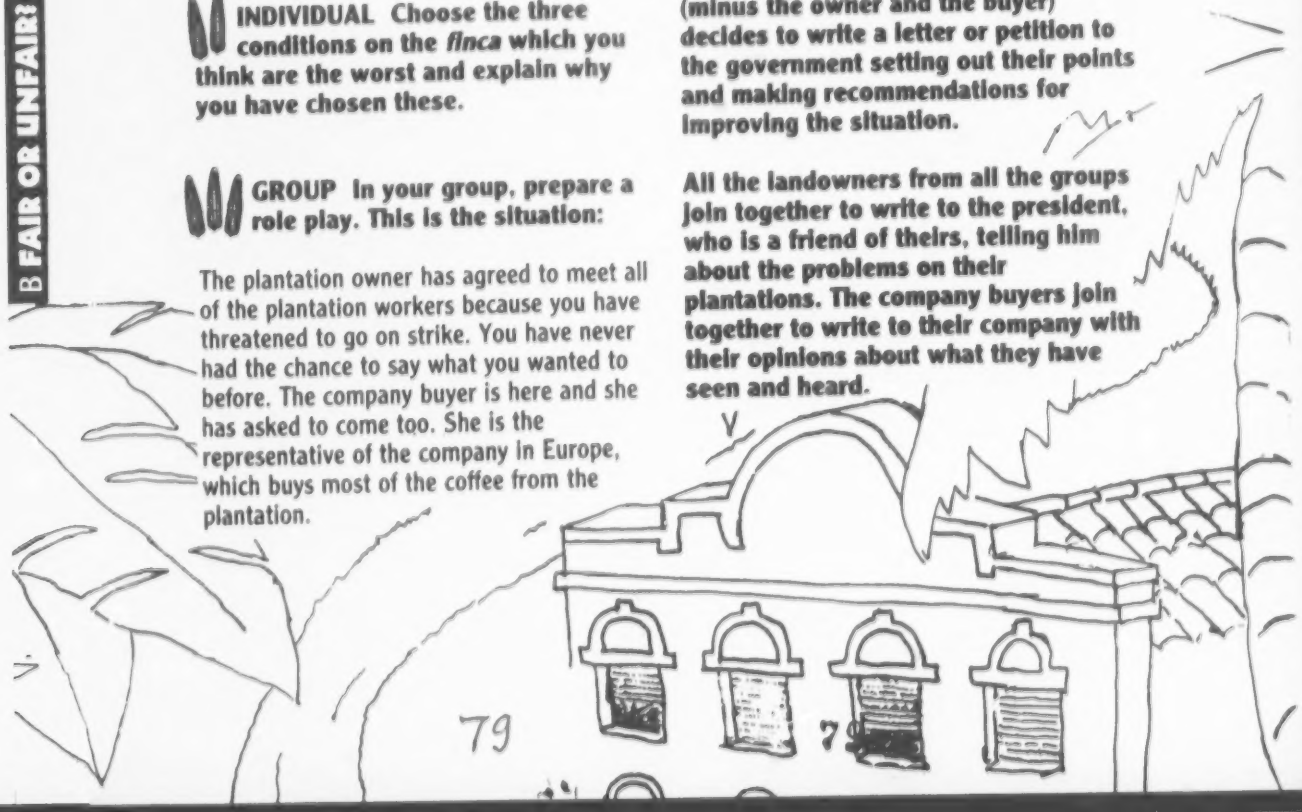
In your group, everyone (except the plantation owner and the company buyer) should prepare for the meeting with the owner. You could jot down some notes (the sheet 'Journey to the *finca*' and your table should help). Each person should think what their character would want to say at the meeting.

Meanwhile the owner should talk with the buyer about how a strike would affect the *finca* and the coffee company.

THE MEETING takes place (within each group). Everyone puts their points to the plantation owner and the company buyer.

AFTER THE MEETING each group (minus the owner and the buyer) decides to write a letter or petition to the government setting out their points and making recommendations for improving the situation.

All the landowners from all the groups join together to write to the president, who is a friend of theirs, telling him about the problems on their plantations. The company buyers join together to write to their company with their opinions about what they have seen and heard.



CRY FOR LAND

PAIR Read the sheet 'Cry for land'. Copy this flow diagram and fill in the missing sentences in it.

The *fincas* have taken the rich land to grow coffee, cotton, etc for export.

▼

▼

There is not enough land to feed everyone.

▼

People have to work for others to earn money to live.

▼

▼

▼

Many work on the *fincas*.

The small farms are on the poorer land because there is no space on the rich land.

People often cannot earn enough and get into debt.

PAIR Imagine you have been given the job of writing a newspaper article on Mayan farmers in Guatemala. You can base your article on an interview with Victor. Imagine that you have a chance to interview him.

Firstly plan the questions you would want to ask him. For example:

Where is your farm?

How steep is it?

Imagine then that you asked Victor the questions and use his answers in the article. The article should also include some information about the land, for example, the size of the farms and the part of the country they are in. Make up a good title for the article and think of the name of the newspaper you are writing for. You could include a picture of Victor, maybe farming his land.

OR

Read the piece below from *We ask why they are hungry* and discuss whether it covers the situation in Guatemala. Think about these questions:

Which lines do you feel are especially relevant to Guatemala? Explain your answer.

Can you add more lines of your own?

I WAS HUNGRY
and you fed your animals with my food.

I WAS HUNGRY
and your multinationals planted your winter tomatoes on our best land.

I WAS HUNGRY
and you wouldn't give up your steak from South America.

I WAS HUNGRY
but they grow coffee for you where corn might grow for my daily meal.

I WAS HUNGRY
but you turned our sugar cane and manioc* into fuel for your cars.

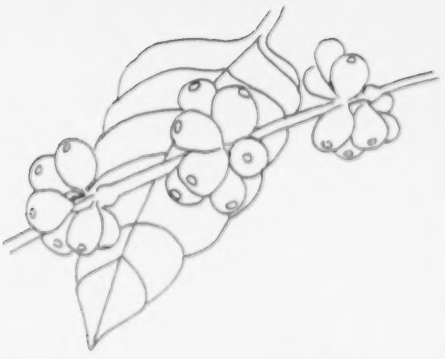
I WAS HUNGRY
but the waste from your factories is poisoning the fishing grounds of the earth.

I WAS HUNGRY
but with your money you bought up my food.

I WAS HUNGRY
while my land grows exotic fruits for your table.

* **manioc** = cassava. The roots are made into flour.

B FAIR OR UNFAIR? LIFE TODAY



GROUP Read this extract which shows a problem which faces many workers in Guatemala. Individuals and often whole families sign up for a period of employment on a *finca* in order to survive. Some villages are left almost as 'ghost towns' at these seasons.

'The Maya in this village have difficulties, as there is not enough land to make them self-sufficient. There is no work nearby, so when they need extra money for food, sickness, farm tools, cotton for clothes or other things, they have to go to one of the finca agents. There is no one else to lend them money. The agents are always waiting to sign them up when they get in debt or sickness comes.'*

Pretend you are a rich member of the village. A poor worker comes to you to borrow money. Write a play showing what you would do and say. You could start like this:

PEPE: Señor, my wife is ill and I need money for medicine...

* ***finca* agents** = person who signs up people to work on the *fincas*

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

INDIVIDUAL Read the sheet 'In sickness and in health'. Write out the TRUE sentences.

1 Around three-quarters / Around a quarter } of primary school children have had nothing to eat before school.

2 A half / A quarter } of Guatemalan children die before the age of five.

3 Diarrhoea / 'Flu / Measles } is the major cause of death in these children.

4 Approximately 8% / Approximately 50% / Approximately 80% } of children under the age of five do not have enough to eat.

PAIR Read this:

The Mayan diet of maize, beans and vegetables is very healthy. It is much healthier than our diet in the West of lots of fat, sugar and red meat. So why do so many of the Maya suffer from malnutrition and die young?

Discuss this with your partner. Then write a paragraph explaining it.

INDIVIDUAL You have just been appointed as the Director of a new Health Centre, specialising in the care of children. You have been asked to write a report of your findings after one month in the job. The report must include both the FACTS you have discovered in your reading (of the information sheet), and OPINIONS obtained from the individuals interviewed (you can pretend that you interviewed all of the people quoted on the information sheet). You could also include RECOMMENDATIONS to improve the situation.

The report could start like this:

IXIMCHE HEALTH CENTRE

Director's Report

There is a serious problem of children not receiving enough to eat in Guatemala. 82% of children under the age of five in Guatemala are malnourished. A religious worker said that...

When you have finished underline all of the FACTS you have used in red, the OPINIONS in green and the RECOMMENDATIONS in black.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

20

PABLO'S DREAM AND TEACHING ◆ MY PEOPLE

PAIR Read the testimonies on education on the information sheet 'Pablo's dream'. With your partner decide which of the four people the sentence is about and fill in the name.

..... was punished by the teacher for a very small mistake in Spanish.

..... had to leave the village to go to secondary school because there was only a primary school in the village.

..... didn't speak the Mayan language of the children she was teaching so couldn't understand them very well.

..... hopes his child will get an education so she can work for the Maya.

GROUP Read the sheet 'Teaching my people'. Imagine you have just received the money to begin a new radio station. The station is to help people to learn - it is not a music station although you can play some music on it. With your partner, plan your own radio station for your local community. Use these questions to help you:

Which language would your radio station be in?
What would you like to learn about? (Is that the same for all of you?)
Think of the other people in your community. What do you think that they would want to learn about? (Remember, you want as many people as possible in the community to listen to the radio station - not just you and your friends!)

Plan your first day of programmes.

PAIR Design your own Mayan education board game! Below are some sentences about school for the Maya which you could include in your game. One set of sentences is positive and the other negative. You could add more if you like. Write down the rules of the game, and give the game a name.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
There is a teacher at the school.	No teacher today.
Your teacher speaks Maya Mam - your language.	Teacher only speaks Spanish. You don't.
Your parents don't need you at home today.	You have to work in the fields today.
There are books for the lesson.	No equipment for lessons.
There is a school only a few miles away.	There is no school in the area.

Play your game!

C

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Then the Spanish came 22
Finding a voice 23
Guatemala... killing fields 24
Bitter and cruel... 25
Nation of prisoners 26
Patrolling the countryside 27
In hope of returning 28

22

THEN ◆ THE SPANISH CAME

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

PAIR With your partner discuss which of these sentences are TRUE to explain why the numbers of the Maya dropped so much when the Spanish came in the 16th century. Write out the true sentences.

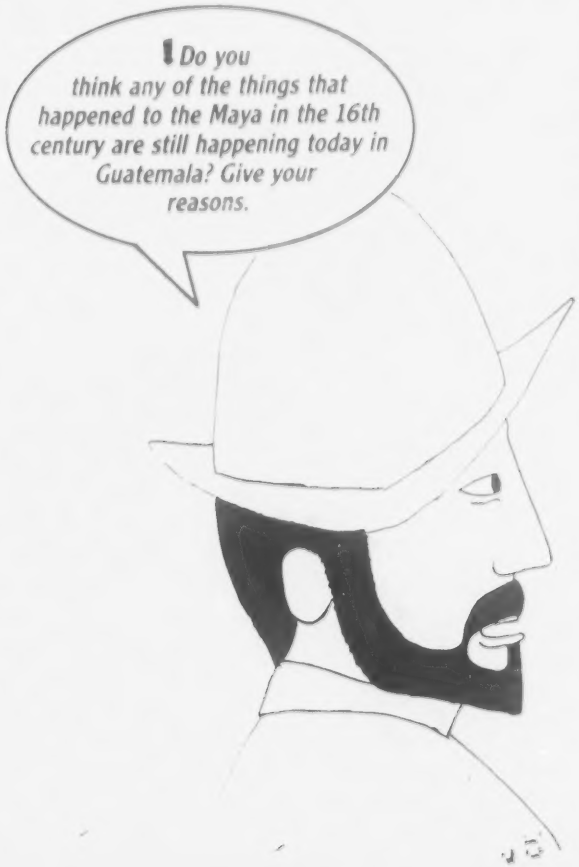
The Spanish killed the Maya.

The Maya killed each other.

The Maya died from illnesses they had never experienced before.

The Maya went to Spain.

The Spanish made them work so hard that many of them died.


Do you think any of the things that happened to the Maya in the 16th century are still happening today in Guatemala? Give your reasons.

PAIR The Maya were very skilled at many things including mathematics, the study of the sky and of time. They wrote their findings in their books, or codices. Friar Landa was a Spanish priest who arrived to convert the Maya to Christianity. He burnt all the Mayan books he found.

Read his description of the books, and burning the books, on the information sheet. Then discuss:

Friar Landa liked reading and writing in Spanish, so why do you think he burnt the Mayan books?

Why do you think the Maya responded as they did to the burning of the books?

GROUP Read both of the extracts from the *Chilam Balam* on the information sheet about the arrival of the Spanish and the effect on the Maya. Then read the following:

Herminio Pérez, a Maya, said: *'The arrival of the Spanish was not, for us, a meeting between two cultures; it was the imposition of one culture on another.'*

1992 is being celebrated as the year when Christopher Columbus 'discovered' the Americas 500 years ago. But there had already been people living there for thousands of years, including the Maya. The lives of these peoples were changed forever by the arrival of the Europeans. The effects have lasted even until today. People in many countries have different views about whether we should celebrate 1992 or not.

It would be interesting to find out how many people know about 1992. You could explain about it and then ask them for their views on whether it should be celebrated or not. Perhaps you could carry out a survey in your class, year or school counting the number who did know about 1992 as well as their views on the celebrations.

FINDING A VOICE

PAIR These are subtitles for each of the six paragraphs of the information sheet 'Finding a voice'. The subtitles say what each paragraph is about. They are jumbled up. Read the information sheet and then decide with your partner which paragraph goes with which subtitle. Write the number of the paragraph in the table.

Subtitle	Paragraph Number
Two sides in Guatemala	
Army repression	
The Maya pushed into the mountains	
The forming of guerrilla groups	
The failure of land reform	
The Maya demand for better conditions	

PAIR Decide with your partner the right place to put these sentences to show what the Mayan farmer and the rich plantation owner might say.

I'd like enough land to feed my family.

We work well with the army to keep Guatemala a rich country.

I want more land to make more money.

We'd like good land in the lowlands to work on.

We run our farms well, better than they could.

The church says people have a right to justice.

If I give away some of my land they'd always want more.

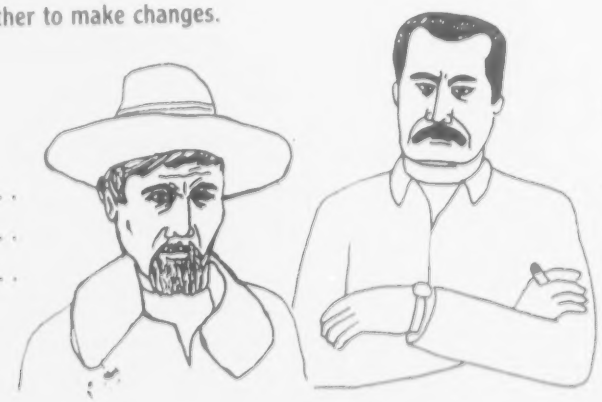
We need to join together to make changes.

Mayan farmer

.....

.....

.....



Rich plantation owner

.....

.....

.....

INDIVIDUAL Write an article with the title: *Guatemala: always changing, always the same... 1492-1992*. For your article use the two extracts below and the information on the 'Then the Spanish came' and 'Finding a voice' sheets.

EXTRACT ONE: 1524

'Within barely two hours they destroyed the village, putting women, children and the aged to the sword, and killing all who did not save themselves by flight.'

BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS 1524

EXTRACT TWO: 1982

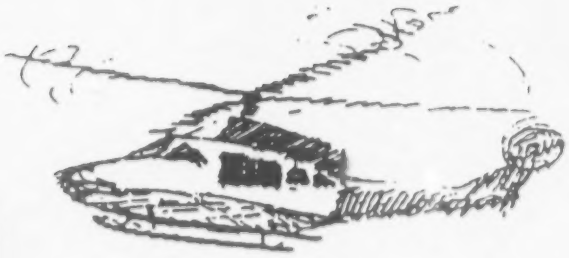
'The soldiers flew into the area by helicopter. First they went to the nearby town, and killed five people, burned the town, and threw people, including women and children, into the flames.'

MAYAN WITNESS 1982

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

24

GUATEMALA.. KILLING ◆FIELDS



INDIVIDUAL Read the poem by José Pérez-Aguirre. Chose four words from the poem that tell you about José's experiences. Write a sentence on each explaining what you think may have happened to José and others like him.

INDIVIDUAL Read the information sheet 'Guatemala... killing fields'. Make the table of spending on arms into a bar graph. Draw another bar graph for spending on education. Write a sentence answering this question:

What do these two bar graphs tell you?

Write a letter to José in the United States telling him what you think of his poem!

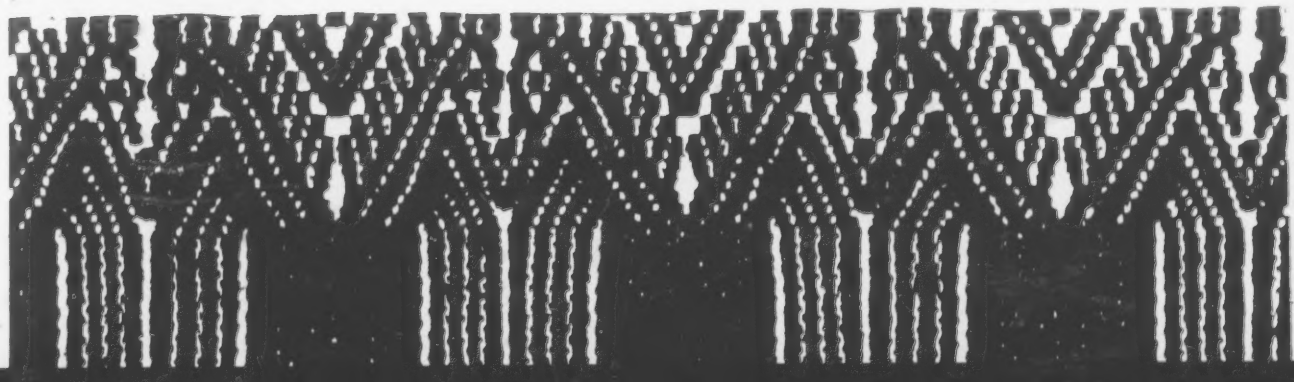
PAIR Read *Report of an Injustice*. Discuss with your partner:

What does it mean to be concerned for 'the enormous pain of another'?

Do you think people SHOULD be concerned?

Why/why not?

Who do you think has lost their humanity in Guatemala today and why?



BITTER AND CRUEL..

GROUP Make a list of all the grievances of the Maya. Use the quotes on the information sheet 'Bitter and cruel'. Start like this:

1. We are ignored in history books.

PAIR Rewrite the following, 'A visit to the doctor', as a play. There should be no speech marks. The name of the person speaking should be put in the margin. Start like this:

Antonio: We must go to the government hospital. They'll look at your eye and give us some medicine.

Bernarda: But how will we get there?

A visit to the doctor

Antonio was given an appointment for his wife Bernarda at a government hospital 100 miles from where they lived. The appointment was for 10 am. To be there on time they had to leave home the previous day, travel by different buses, spend the night in the strange city, and get to the hospital before 10am.

Bernarda speaks practically no Spanish and Antonio speaks it poorly. They were dressed in their best Mayan clothes. They were in the waiting room of the eye clinic at 9am. At 10.30am Antonio went to the receptionist and reminded her that they were there. She told him the doctor wasn't in yet. By 11, the doctor was seeing patients, but Bernarda was not called. At 11.30, Antonio reminded the receptionist again. *'I know you're here,'* she retorted. *'Sit down and wait. I'll call you when the doctor is ready to see your wife.'* Other people were going in to see the doctor. What time were the other patients' appointments? By 1 pm Antonio left his wife and bought some coffee and bread for lunch. Every now and then, he'd try to catch the receptionist's eye, but she didn't look up.

Finally, when they were the only ones left in the waiting room, and the last patient had come out of the doctor's office, Antonio went to her, *'When will the doctor see my wife? It is 4 o'clock. We must soon catch a bus or we will have to stay here overnight.' 'Oh, I forgot to tell you,'* she answered, putting on her jacket. *'The doctor had an errand and didn't have time to see your wife today. Come back tomorrow, at 10 am. You'll be the first he'll attend.'*

'They've always said, 'Poor Maya, they can't speak,' so many speak for them. That's why I decided to learn Spanish.'

RIGOBERTA MENCHU, A MAYAN WOMAN

INDIVIDUAL Pretend you are a young Maya, like Rigoberta, who has learnt Spanish to put your people's case forward. Write a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations explaining how your people have been discriminated against, and how you feel about this.

26

NATION OF PRISONERS

C HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

SEE YOUR TEACHER FIRST

CLASS Your teacher will explain this activity to you.

PAIR Read the sentences on the sheet 'Nation of prisoners' which have been used to describe the model village in Guatemala. Decide with your partner where each sentence should go in this table:

Positive for the Maya	Negative for the Maya	Don't know

COPY INTO YOUR BOOK

Compare your answers with another pair. Discuss any sentences that you have put in different categories to each other. What some people see as positive, others may see as negative. You could discuss this as a class.

INDIVIDUAL Read the following extract from a 1984 Guatemalan army publication:

It says that the model villages are designed for:

'... those who, during months, and even years, wandered starving, pursued, harassed by fear, hunger and illness, have found today, in their own territories – where they have voluntarily decided to return – a secure and comfortable place that is their own, so that in tranquillity they can dedicate themselves to rebuilding their future.'

Now answer these questions:

Does this match what you have learnt about model villages?

Would you like to live in one of these villages? Explain your answer.

Do you think the Maya want to live in these villages?

Why do you think the army wants people to live in these villages?

Why do you think the army is involved so much in the community?

PATROLLING THE COUNTRYSIDE

PAIR Read the information sheet 'Patrolling the countryside'. With your partner look at the following sentences and decide which ones are true and which are false. If you can't decide tick the DON'T KNOW column.

	True	False	Don't Know
Civil patrollers choose to be part of the patrol.			
They are paid for their patrol work.			
They are punished if they miss a duty.			
Their clothes are provided free.			
They always carry guns.			
You have to be 18 to be part of a patrol.			
They may have to kill people they know.			
They only have to do civil patrol duty once a month.			
Civil patrollers are forced to neglect their crops.			

GROUP Imagine you are 14 years old and a new law has been introduced that you must take part in a civil patrol in your area. You are told to report to the area commander on Saturday at 12 o'clock midday. You will have to do patrol duty for 12 hours every Saturday.

List in your group all the things you do on a Saturday between 12 o'clock midday and midnight - for example, your Saturday job, going to the cinema, etc. Remember these are all the things you'll have to give up. Think how you would you feel if you could no longer do these things.

In your group write a play showing the effect that being part of a civil patrol would have on your life and on the lives of your family and friends. You could start like this:

MUM: What's that letter you're reading?
YOU: Oh no, I can't do this...

GROUP Imagine that you live in a Mayan village. A friend has come to stay with you. He (or she) has lost his identity papers. The army has been asking questions because they have seen someone they don't recognise. Your friend is in the wrong area and can't give himself up because the army will kill him, thinking he's a subversive (someone who wants to overthrow the government). But if you don't give your friend up and the army finds out, YOU will be killed.

In your group, discuss what you would do in this situation and report back to the class.

'You can either kill them or be killed.' A CIVIL PATROL MEMBER

'The patrols are there to control everyone entering or leaving the village, and pass on information to the army.' A CIVIL PATROL MEMBER

28

IN HOPE ◆ OF RETURNING

GROUP Work in groups on ONE of these:

a refugees in the cities, and refugees in the mountains

b refugees in the camps in Mexico

Read the information about the topic your group is finding out about. Start filling in this table:

Problems faced by refugees

In the cities	In the mountains	In the refugee camps
can't get proper jobs		

COPY INTO YOUR BOOK

Report back to the class on the problems your group(s) of refugees faces. Use other groups' reports to finish filling in your table.

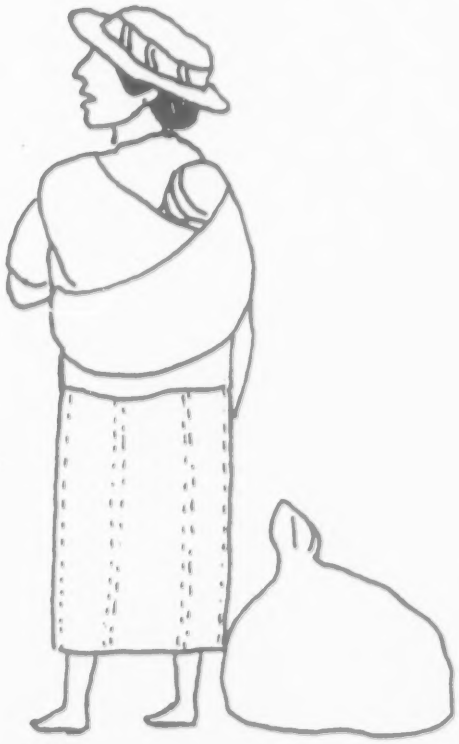
GROUP **Imagine that you are one of the refugees living in a refugee camp in Mexico, or hiding in Guatemala in the mountains or a city. The government announces that all of the trouble is over and that you are welcome back, though not necessarily to the area where you lived before.**

Spend some time discussing it in your group. You are not sure what to do, or how true the news is. Read the letter sent to the President from a group of refugees in Mexico (on the sheet called 'Exile'), and the poem *Exile*.

If you decide to return, write a letter to a friend or someone in your family, telling them why you are returning.

OR, if you decide not to return, write to the President of Guatemala or to the Secretary-General of the UN about your decision. Give the reasons for not returning to Guatemala.

GROUP **Read the information about street children. Imagine that you are one of the street children. You have heard that there are countries where you can live in freedom. Think of what you would look forward to. What would your dreams be? Discuss this in your group. Either write about or perform your dreams.**



D

THE MISSING

The Missing 30
Disappearances 31
Speaking out 32
Tell as many people as you can 33

THE MISSING

PAIR Read the poem 'The Missing'. Now look carefully at the first four verses.

Fill this table in:

Relation	Name	Job	When did they disappear?	Why do you think they disappeared?
Husband				

COPY INTO YOUR BOOK

Your pair should join with another pair. Discuss these questions:

What does the poem tell you about the type of people who disappear?

Are these the types of people you thought disappeared?

If not, what type of person did you think disappeared?

INDIVIDUAL Look carefully at verse five and make a list of the 'noise' words which have been used. What do you notice?

Read the poem 'The Missing' again. Write your own poem. Imagine you live in Guatemala and it's members of your family that have gone missing. You'll need to describe them, as 'The Missing' does. Try to use your own 'noise' words and your own questions and answers about why people disappear.

You could start like this:

Can anyone tell me if they've seen my father
The girl/boy asked
His name is....; he is.... years old.

PAIR Discuss:

What do you think is meant by the last two lines of verse five?

Read the last verse again. This time look particularly at the answers given to the questions. List the questions and answers separately in two columns in your book, like this:

QUESTIONS ANSWERS

Discuss:

What do you think the answers mean?

DISAPPEARANCES..

INDIVIDUAL Look at the page from the Amnesty International report on the sheet 'Disappearances'. Fill in the missing parts of these sentences:

Eulogio Gómez Pula worked as a .....

..... was only 19 when he disappeared in 1984.

Lesvía Lucrecia García Escobar was a member of a .....

Segundo Gómez López disappeared with his .....

Lesvía Lucrecia Garcia Escobar disappeared while she was .....

René Arnaldo Gomez Calito would be ..... now.

INDIVIDUAL Read about Pedro on the sheet 'Disappearances' and think of the effect of his disappearance on his family and friends. Now read about Beatriz:

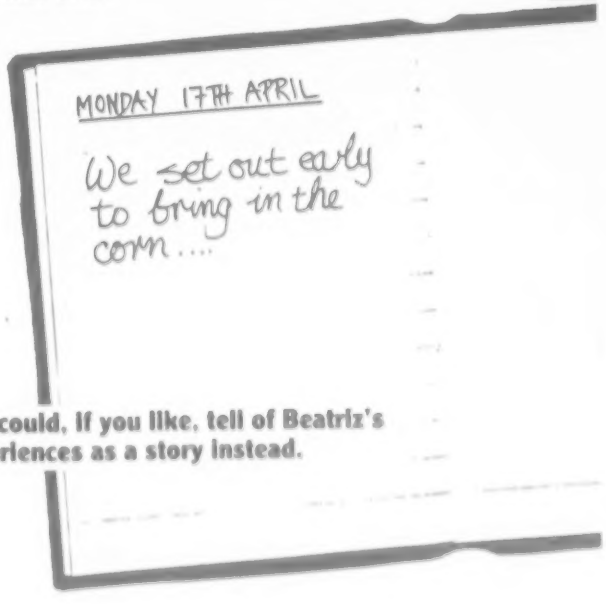
Beatriz is a 13 year old Mayan girl. It is harvest time and yesterday she was helping her father to bring in the corn. It had been a wonderful day with plenty of corn and there had been time to laugh and talk of the fun everyone would have at the *fiesta* celebrating the success of the harvest.The next day, though, was a very different day for her. In the middle of the night three men had come for her father. He had not returned.

Write three extracts in Beatriz's diary:

1 The last day with her father
2 The day he didn't come back
3 One month later

Start like this:

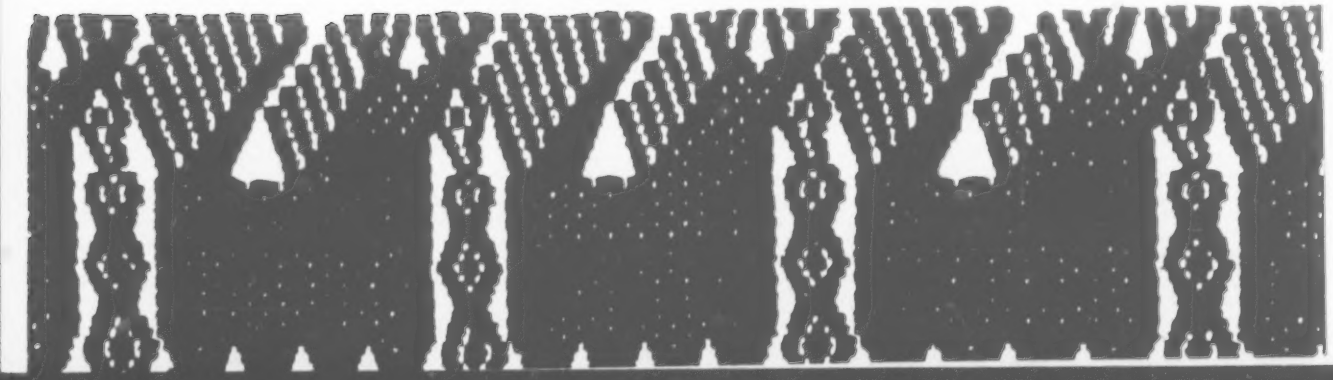
D THE MISSING



You could, if you like, tell of Beatriz's experiences as a story instead.

GROUP What would you do if your parents disappeared? Or your sister or brother? Or your best friend?

In groups discuss how you would feel about someone important to you going missing. What would you do? You could write a response as well.



32

SPEAKING OUT

D THE MISSING

PAIR Read the information about each of the three human rights groups on the sheets. With your partner match the name of CERJ, CONAVIGUA and GAM with information about each organisation:

..... was started by women who met while they were searching for their loved ones.
..... is trying to disband the civil patrols.
..... is trying to stop forced recruitment to the army.
..... is trying to protect Mayan culture.
..... collects information on the Missing.
..... tries to support its members with money.

GROUP Look at one of the three groups and develop a leaflet, poster or advertisement which you think would persuade others to join the group. To help you design the material you should think of points like these:

Why this issue is important.
Who the material is aimed at.

GROUP Read the information about GAM. Now read the following:

A painful choice One woman said about GAM when it started *'. . . there is a group that has the courage to carry on, to meet, for this feeling, this courage. But it seems that it will need a miracle for the group not to be destroyed as so many others have been in our country.'* The husband of this woman had disappeared, leaving her with three children. She stopped looking for him and did not join GAM.

With your partner discuss:

What reasons can you think of why she would stop looking for someone she loved?

What arguments would you use to try and convince her to join GAM?

What arguments might she use in reply?

You could develop a role play of the conversation between the two women.

Remembering how dangerous it is to work for human rights in Guatemala, would you support the three human rights groups if you lived there? Give the reasons why you would or would not support the groups.

TELL AS ◆MANY PEOPLE◆ AS YOU ◆CAN

INDIVIDUAL **Write a message of support or draw a card of support for one of the human rights groups in Guatemala - CERJ, CONAVIGUA or GAM.**

You could send your card to the organisation.

PAIR **Imagine you have joined a local group which has decided to look at a new issue. You want the group to look at the rights of the Maya in Guatemala. You are going to argue the case for supporting CERJ, CONAVIGUA and GAM. Prepare the speech you would make. You will probably need to look back on your earlier work on the Maya to remind yourselves of the oppression they suffer, and the need for groups like CERJ, CONAVIGUA and GAM.**

Make your speech to other members of your class, or to another class, or in assembly.

GROUP Sting decided to help the families of the Missing by writing a song which showed people what is happening in countries like Chile. The pupils at Notre Dame school in London have been supporting the families of the Missing in Guatemala for the last five years.

Look at the booklet they have produced showing how they have written articles for newspapers, produced an exhibition which has been hired, sent cards to Guatemala and many other ideas.

If you would like to, use these ideas to help you decide how you can do something.

Minority
Rights
Group

379 Brixton Road
London SW9 7DE
United Kingdom

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

3

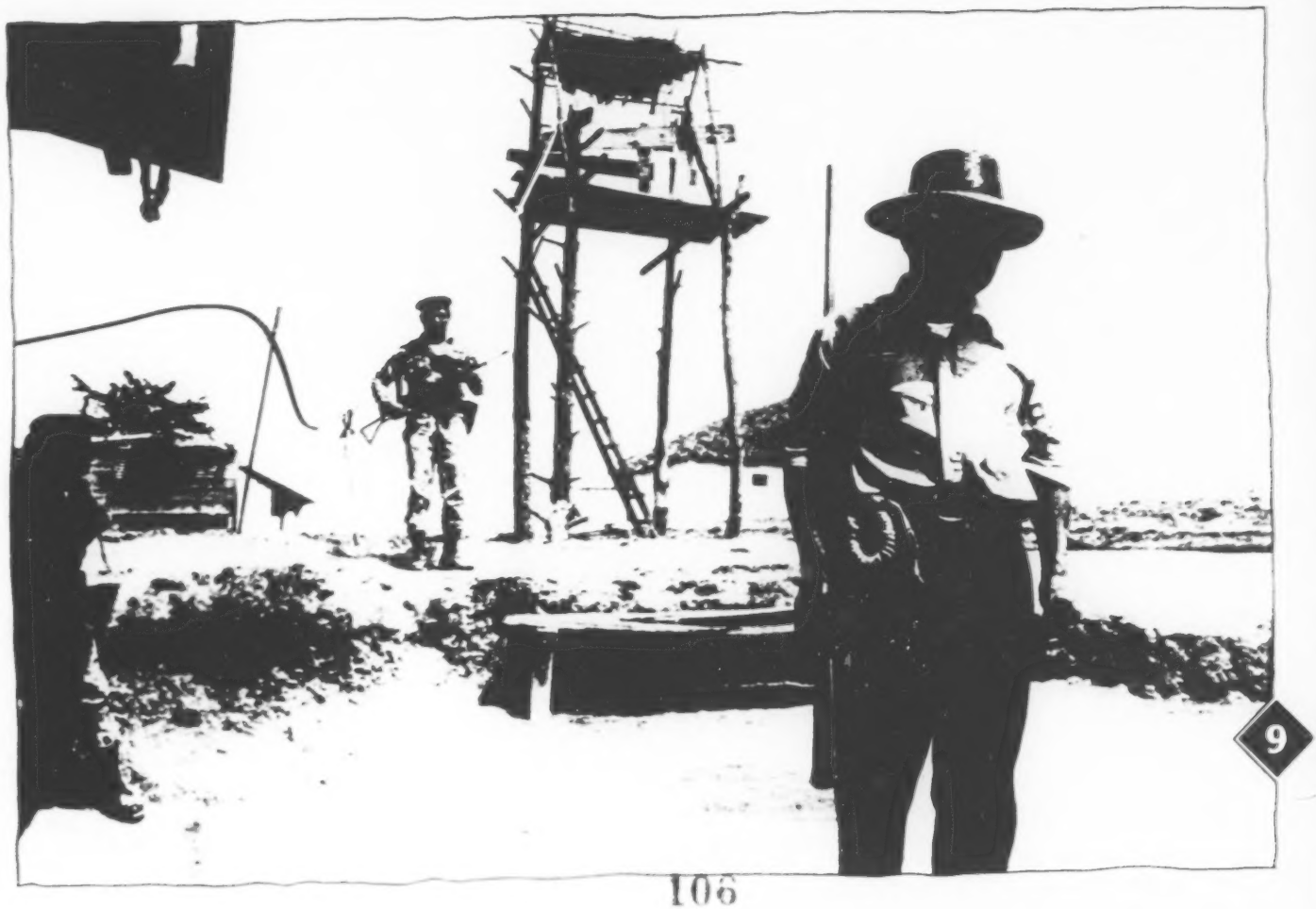
4

5

6

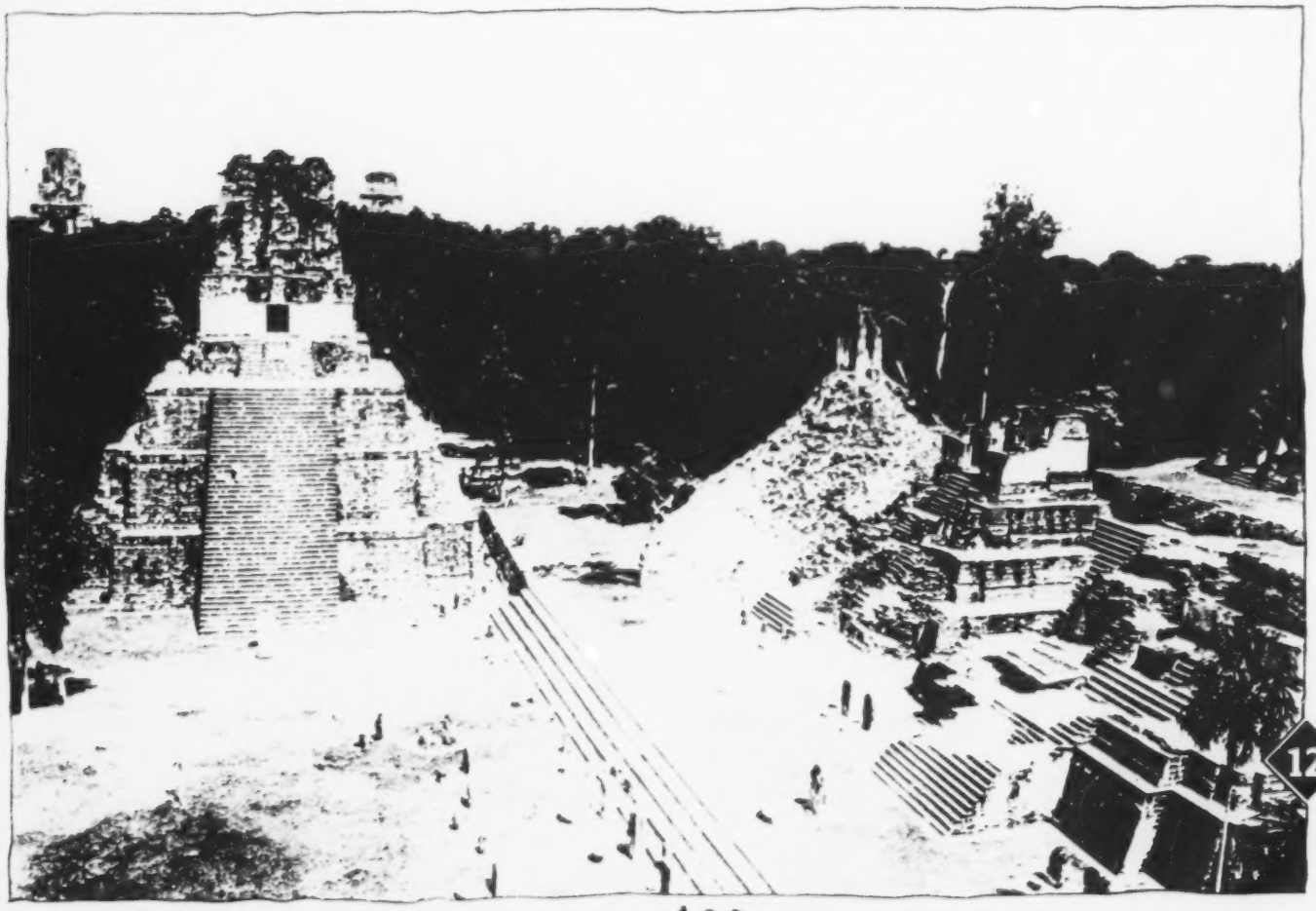
GRUPO
DE
APOYO MUTUO
7

t
p
s
8


9

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

11


12

CENTRO COMERCIAL 6ª Av.
13
NOTE
RITZ
ENTR
Marilú
DIX
ALMACEN
MARGO
La gatita
Chicos y Chicas
El mundo de la CAMISA
Metropolitan Mills
boutique Casa Yoi's
OPTICA LA GAFITA DE ORO
Ambassador Tour's
PERSONALIZED SERVICE
TOUR OPERATOR
OFFICE Nº 9
JOCKEY LOUNGE
COCKTAIL BAR
AL CARBON
BAR
SERVICE
ESTAURANT-PERUANO
National
Panasonic
Pair
LOCUMANA
CITIBANK PARQUEO

14

15

16

17

18

19

20